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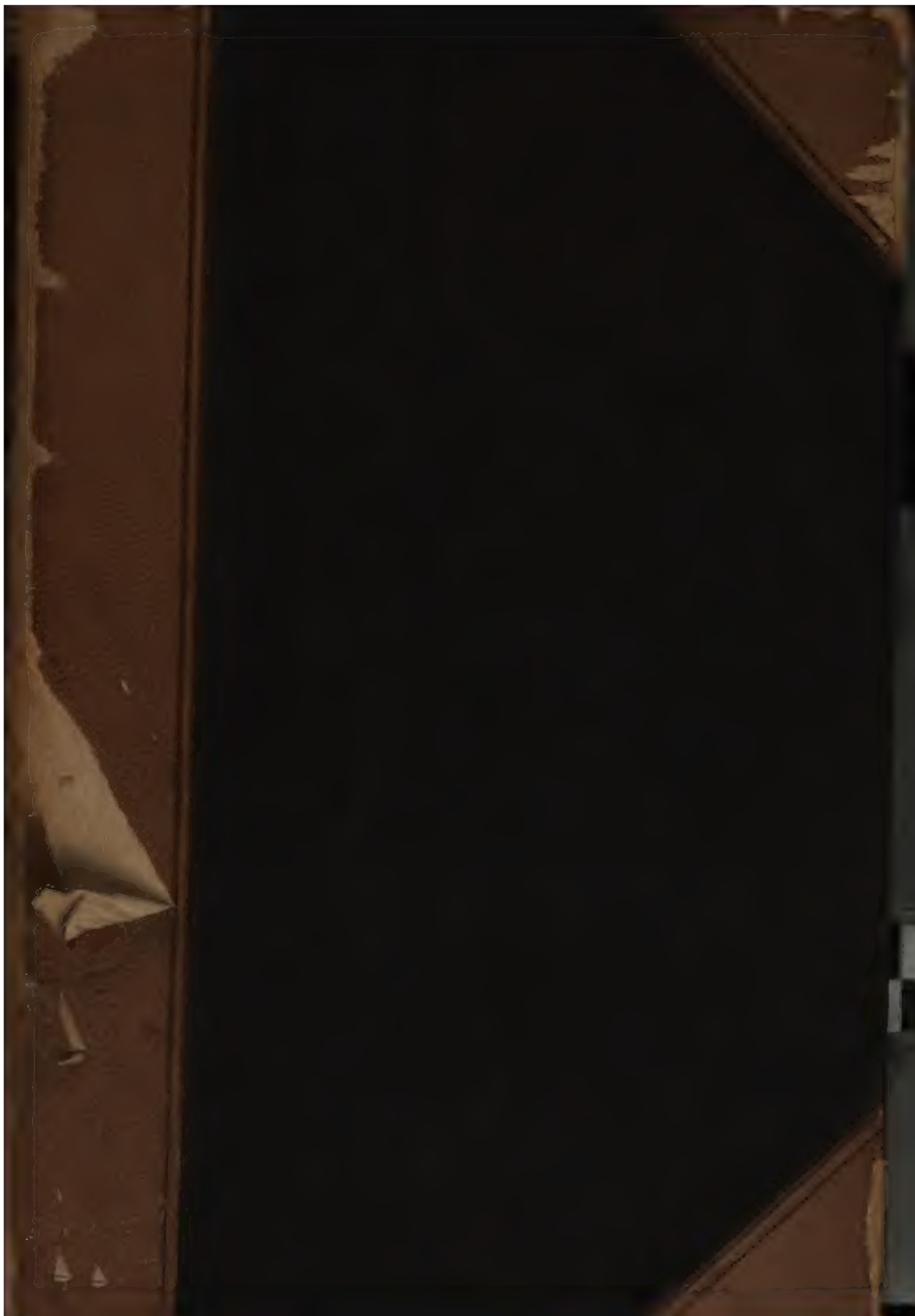
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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XXXI.

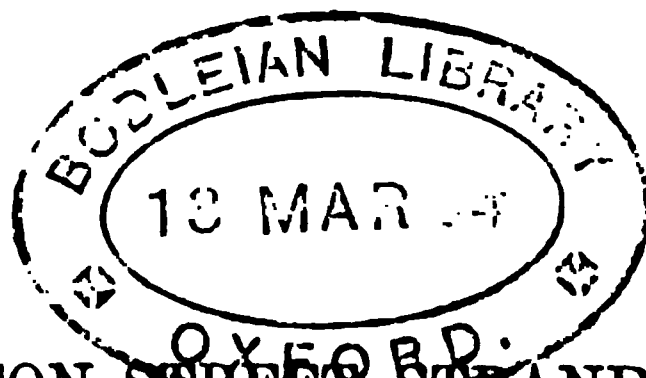
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY. A		DACRES, The Lords	339	Hebrides, Life in the	365, 395, 437
Serial Story by Anthony Trollope	1, 25, 49, 73, 97, 121, 145, 169, 193, 217, 241, 265, 289, 313, 337, 361, 385, 409, 433, 457, 501, 524, 545.	Dales of Westmoreland, Customs in the	435	Henry the Seventh Wooling the Queen of Naples	89
Absent-Minded People	321	Dashing Diplomatist	136	Hexham, Battle of	131
Aldston	324	Day in Perugia	245	Hexham Minster	130
Algerian Lion Story	371	De Quincey at Grassmere	425	Hill, The Rev. Rowland	487
Ainwick Castle	125	Derwentwater, Earl of	181	"Homeless, Ragged, and Torn"	351
Arab Yarns, Some Old	294	Derwentwater Lake	331	Hospital for Consumption	28
Arthur, King, Yorkshire, Traditions of	232	Destitution in the Hebrides	365, 395, 437	Hospital, University College	509
Australia and New Guinea	434	Dick Turpin	183	How the National Records have been Kept	40
BAMBOURGH Castle	80	Dispensary, The Hospital	31	Hull	271
Banner Street Refuge	351	Domesday Book at the Record Office	41	INSPECTING and Surveying	101
Barbers in Turkey	330	Doncaster	274	Inspectors of Nuisances	101
Barra, The Isle of	398	Drinking Customs, Past and Present	408	Iodine from Seaweed	368
Battle of Marston Moor	134	Duchy of Lancaster	530	Iron Works of Yorkshire	272
Bazaars of Turkey	241	Duel, The Baron and Mr. Elliot	139	JACK, the Toad	17
Before the Hospital Fire	509	EARTHQUAKES in the Sandwich Isles	416	Jelly Fish	441
Barwick-on-Tweed	123	Edenhall	325	Jennifer, A Serial Story, by Mrs. Pender-Cudlip	451, 506, 529
Beverley	371	Edward and the Countess of Salisbury	129	Jenkins, Henry, The Centenarian	222
Bird Life in the Hebrides	399	Egyptian Bazaar	341	Jewa, Slaughter of, at York	182
Bird Shops in Turkey	343	Elliot, Mr. Hugh	138	Jorevaux Abbey	223
Bishop's Repentance, The. A Story	467, 498	English Counties, Chronicles of 79, 125, 150, 230, 269, 324, 434, 461, 520	57	KEAN, Edmund, Stories of	485
Bit of an Old Story	172	Episcopes, Some Noted	303	Kelp-burning in the Hebrides	369
Bluecoat School	476	Epithets, Misapplied	100	Kendal	428
Bolton Castle	223	Escape from Prison	89	Kirkdale, The Bone Cave at	273
Bosphorus, Fishing in the	342	Exchequer, The	188	Kirk Oswald	325
Boundary, Scotland and England	330	Execution of Dick Turpin	188	Kirkstall Abbey	369
Bradford	270	FAIRFAX, Lord	325	Kismul Castle	396
Bridlington	272	Farnley Hall, Home of Turner the Painter	269	LADIES' Colleges	111
Brompton Hospital for Consumption	23	"Fax" Business in Turkey	319	Ladies' Debating Club	114
CARMER of Constantinople	344	Fire Fountains	415	Lady Margaret Hall, Ladies' College	115
Calder Abbey	331	Fish at the Hebrides	437	Lady Sybil, the Legend of	523
Camellia, Story of the	275	Fish-eating in Turkey	342	Lakes of Cumberland	331
Carlisle	336	Fishers' Prejudices against Certain Fish	439	Lancashire, Chronicles of	461, 530
Carlisle Besieged by Prince Charles	328	Fishing in the Bosphorus	342	Lancashire Legends	524
Cattle Market in the Hebrides	398	Fishing in the Hebrides	397	Lancashire Witches	525
Caves at Ingleborough and Settle	185, 224	Fish Market of Stamboul	341	Lancaster Castle	520
Chanery Lane, Rolls Yard	38	Fish, Strange Kinds of	440	Land, Archbishop, and the Jester	330
Charles the Second Sleeping in Church, Story of	487	Fish, The Levitical Law Concerning	440	Law Courts, The New	7
Charterhouse School	472	Flodden Field	128, 329	Leeds, Manufactures	269, 270
Chevy Chase	130	Flower Stories	275	Lindisfarne	82
Christmas at Brompton	28	Ford Castle, The Heron Family	129	Lion Story, A	371
Chronicles of English Counties:		"Forget-me-not" Story of the	275	Lisson Grove on Saturday Night	402
Northumberland	79, 125	Fountains Abbey	270	Lowther Castle	427
Yorkshire	130, 230, 269	Fox, George, the Quaker	331, 464	"Luck" of Pennington	381
Cumberland	324	France, An Escape from Prison	160	"Luck" of Edenhall	325
Westmoreland	424	French Gourmets	58	MADAME GÉRARD, A Story	132, 155
Lancashire	461, 520	Fruit Shops in Constantinople	320	Mariborough, Sarah, Duchess of	90
City of London School	448	Furness Abbey	461	Marston Moor	164
City Schools	448, 472	GASTRONOMY in France	58	Mary Queen of Scots at Bolton	223
Cliffords of Skipton	234	Gentlemanly Joe. A Story	299	Massacre, Lord, Escape from Prison	100
Coffee-dealers in Turkey	319	Geoffrey Stirling. A Serial Story, by Mrs. Leth Adams	19, 43, 63, 92, 117, 139, 163, 187, 211, 237, 260, 295, 309, 331, 355, 379, 405, 429, 453, 477, 493	Master of the Rolls	98
Coleridge, The Poet, at Grassmere	424	Giant Toad, The	284	Merchant Taylors' School	472
Colet's School	473	Gililand	330	Micklegate Bar, York	183
Colleges for Ladies	111	Girton College	112	Middleham	233
Common Pleas	39	Gordon-Cumming, Miss, in the Sandwich Islands	413	Mignouette, Story of the	275
Constantinople Bazaar	341	Gourmets, Some Notable	58	Mingalay, The Isle of	397
Constantinople Street Hawkers	375	Grassmere	424	Misapplied Epithets	203
Constantinople, Trades' Guilds of	317, 341, 375	Great Seal, The	38	Mr. Scarborough's Family. A Serial Story, by Anthony Trollope	1, 25, 49, 73, 97, 121, 145, 169, 193, 217, 241, 265, 289, 313, 337, 361, 385, 409, 433, 457, 501
Consumption Hospital, The	28	Grocers in Turkey	319	Money Changers, The Turkish	276
Cooking, The Art of	57	Guilds of Constantinople	317, 341, 375, 377	Monsieur Le Pasteur. A Story	419, 445
Corby	325	HALLS of Themis	7	Monsters, Arab Stories of	235
Cormorant Bird, The	444	Handkerchief, The	185	Montague, Lady Mary Wortley	91
Criticisms	543	Harria, the Isle of	308	My First Pantomime	63
Crofters' Agitation	365, 395, 437	Hawaii, Volcanoes of	413	NATIONAL Records, The	40
Cumberland, Chronicles of	324	Hebridean Fish, Flesh, and Fowl	437	Naworth Castle	329
Cumberland, The Mines of	324			New Cut, Saturday Night in the	404
Cumming, Miss Gordon-, in the Sandwich Isles	413			New Guinea	534
Curious Commissiona.	89			New Law Courts	7
Curious Courtships	89				
Curious Instances of Absence of Mind	321				
Curious Records.	39				

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
New Mrs. Wilde, The. A Story	204, 227	St. Luke's, E.C. A Refuge for	351	Traveller's Tales, A :	
Newnham College for Ladies	114	the Poor	351	Bit of an Old Story	172
Night Refuge in Banner Street	351	St. Paul's School	474	Tricycles, Exhibition of	210
Nobody's Child. A Story	250, 277	Sandwich Isles, The	413	Turbots and Halibuts	440
Northumberland, Chronicles of	79, 125	Sandwich Isles. Volcanoes	413	Turkey Fish-markets	341
Northumberland, Early History	80	Sanitary Laws, Some Old	104	Turkey, Shopkeepers in	318
of	80	Saturday Night	401	Turkey. Signatures by Seal	343
OCTOPODS for Food	342	Scarborough	272	Turkey, Trades in	318, 341, 375
Old Springs and Drinking Foun-		Scars of Yorkshire, The	224	Turkish Cookery	343
tains	104	Scawfell	331	Turkish Markets	317, 342, 375
Otterburn	130	Schools, Some City	448, 472	Turkish Waters, Fine Fish in	342
Outer Hebrides	305, 395, 437	Seals in the Hebrides	438	the	342
PALACE of Justice, The	7	Searching the Records	41	Turkish Yaourt	343
Palace of Parchments	37	Seaweed, The Use of	360	Turner the Painter at Craven	260
Palamedes	342	Sedan Chairs in Turkey	344	Turpin and the Ride to York	182
Pantomime, My First	65	Selby Abbey	271	Turpin's Execution	183
Pastry Cooks, The Turkish	320	Serpents. Arab Yarns	234	UNIVERSITY College Hospital	509
Paul Jones	272	Seven Dials, Saturday Night in	402	Unpremeditated Criticisms	543
Pendragon Castle	428	Shoeblacks in Constantinople	344	VIKINGR, Tombs of the	366
Pepys, Mr., Stories of	90, 185	Shillingbury Sketches :		Violets, Stories Concerning	276
Percys, The Family of the	79, 125	No. I. The Town	5	Volcanoes of the Sandwich	413
Perugia, A Day in	245	No. II. Our Young Man	51	Isles	
Philip Cartaret and Lady J.		No. III. The Doctor	107	WARK Castle	128
Montague	90	No. IV. The Rector	149	Warkworth	84
Pocket-Handkerchiefs.	185	No. V. The Grammar School	197	"Was it Success?" A Story	10, 33, 61, 84
Pontefract Castle	270	No. VI. The Grammar School	255	Watchmen, The Turkish	375
Poor and Homeless, A Refuge		No. VII. Our Farmer	304	Water Supply of Constantinople	376
for the	351	No. VIII. Our Baronet	346	Western Isles. The Hebrides	365, 395, 437
Preston	521	No. IX. Our Baronet	380	Westmoreland, Chronicles of	424
Prince Charles Entering Car-		Signature by Seal in Turkey	343	Whitby	272
lisle	328	Skiddaw	331	White Rats	282
QUAKER, George Fox.	331, 464	Skipton Castle	234	Windermere	425
RADCLIFFES, The	131	Snakes and Rats	280	Wonders of India, Arab Yarns of	234
Rats	280, 293	Some City Schools	448, 472	Wordsworth at Grasmere	424, 465
Rats in Ships	293	Some Curious Commissions	89	World on Wheels	200
Read's, Miss, Legacy to the		Some Noted Epicures	57	Wycoller Hall, The Spectre of	524
Brompton Hospital	32	Some Old Arab Yarns	234	YAOURT, The Turkish Dish	343
Rebukes	484	Somerville Hall, Ladies' College	115	York Castle	181
Record Office, The	37	South Bernera Lighthouse	397	Yorkshire, Chronicles of	180, 220, 260
Records, Some Curious	39	Spikenard, Story of the	276	Yorkshire Coast, The	272
Redesdale	130	Spitalfields, Saturday Night in	403	York, The City of	180
Refuge, The Banner Street	351	Stories :		POETRY.	
Richard the Third, The Son of	223	Algerian Lion Story	371	Dream, The	204
Richmond Castle	220	Bishop's Repentance, The	467, 488	Drive, A	106
Rievaulx Abbey	273	Gentlemanly Joe	290	Fairies' Knowe, The	419
Robin Hood and Little John	427	Madame Gerand	132, 155	From Cannes	444
Rokebys, Family of the	221	Monsieur Le Pasteur	419, 445	Love's Question	277
Rolls Chapel	33	New Mrs. Wilde	204, 227	Nightingales, The	304
Roman Wall at Tynedale	130	Nobody's Child	250, 277	Question, A	10
St. Bees	331	Time Bargains	513, 537	Rose, The	346
St. Clement's Cathedral in the		"Was it Success?"	10, 33, 61, 84	Stephanotis	371
Hebrides	366	Surveying and Inspecting of Old		Towton Roses	179
St. Cuthbert	82	and To-day	101	Two	466
St. Kilda, The Isle of	398	TAYLOR, John, The Centenarian	324	Winter Picture, A	155
		Temperance	498		
		Time Bargains. A Story	513, 537		
		Toad, Jack the	17		
		Toad, The Giant	284		
		Towton, Battle of	270		
		Trades' Guilds of Constantinople	317		
			341, 375		

THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1882,

ENTITLED

LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY,

BY WALTER BESANT,

WILL BE FOUND AT THE END OF THE VOLUME.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
I. ALL THE PEOPLE STANDING	1	VII. MATHEW'S FRIENDLY OFFER	42
II. THE ASTONISHMENT OF MATHEW HUMBLE	8	VIII. IS IT TRUE?	47
III. HOW RALPH SOUGHT FORTUNE	14	IX. THE WISDOM OF THE STRONG MAN	53
IV. DRUSILLA'S STORY	22	X. SAILOR NAN'S RIDE	58
V. A SECOND WHITTINGTON	28	XI. THE SALE OF THE COTTAGE	63
VI. THE LETTER AT LAST	35	XII. "GOD REST YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN"	69

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 736. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 1883.

PRICE TWOPENCE

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLII. MOUNTJOY SCARBOROUGH GOES TO BUSTON.

MR. GREY returned to London after staying but one night, having received fresh instructions as to the will. The will was to be prepared at once, and Mr. Barry was to bring it down for execution. "Shall I not inform Augustus?" asked Mr. Grey.

But this did not suit with Mr. Scarborough's views of revenge. "I think not. I would do by him whatever honesty requires; but I have never told him that I mean to leave him anything. Of course he knows that he is to have the estate. He is revelling in the future poverty of poor Mountjoy. He turned him out of his house just now because Mountjoy would not obey him by going to—Brazil. He would turn him out of this house if he could because I won't at once go—to the devil. He is something over-masterful, is Master Augustus, and a rub or two will do him good. I'd rather you wouldn't tell him, if you please." Then Mr. Grey departed without making any promise, but he determined that he would be guided by the squire's wishes. Augustus Scarborough was not of a nature to excite very warmly the charity of any man.

Harry remained for two or three days shooting with Mountjoy, and once or twice he saw the squire again. "Merton and I have managed to concoct that letter," said the squire. "I'm afraid your uncle will find it rather long. Is he impatient of long letters?"

"He likes long sermons."

"If anybody will listen to his reading. I think you have a deal to answer for yourself, when you could not make so

small a sacrifice to the man to whom you were to owe everything. But he ought to look for a wife in consequence of that crime, and not falsely allege another. If, as I fear, he finds the wife-plan troublesome, our letter may perhaps move him, and Mountjoy is to go down and open his eyes. Mountjoy hasn't made any difficulty about it."

"I shall be greatly distressed——" Harry began.

"Not at all. He must go. I like to have my own way in these little matters. He owes you as much reparation as that, and we shall be able to see what members of the Scarborough family you would trust the most."

Harry, during the two days, shot some hares in company with Mountjoy, but not a word more was said about the adventure in London. Nor was the name of Florence Mountjoy ever mentioned between the two suitors. "I'm going to Buston, you know," Mountjoy said once.

"So your father told me."

"What sort of a fellow shall I find your uncle?"

"He's a gentleman, but not very wise." No more was said between them on that head, but Mountjoy spoke at great length about his own brother and his father's will.

"My father is the most singular man you ever came across."

"I think he is."

"I am not going to say a good word for him. I wouldn't let him think that I had said a good word for him. In order to save the property he has maligned my mother, and has cheated me and the creditors most horribly;—most infernally. That's my conviction, though Grey thinks otherwise. I can't forgive him,—and won't, and he knows it. But after that he is

going to do the best thing he can for me. And he has begun by making me a decent allowance again as his son. But I'm to have that only as long as I remain here at Tretton. Of course I have been fond of cards."

"I suppose so.

"Not a doubt of it. But I haven't touched a card now for a month nearly. And then he is going to leave me what property he has to leave. And he and my brother have paid off those Jews among them. I'm not a bit obliged to my brother. He's got some game of his own which I don't quite clearly see, and my father is doing this for me simply to spite my brother. He'd cut down every tree upon the place if Grey would allow it. And yet to give Augustus the property my father has done this gross injustice."

"I suppose the money-lenders would have had the best of it had he not."

"That's true. They would have had it all. They had measured every yard of it, and had got my name down for the full value. Now they're paid."

"That's a comfort."

"Nothing's a comfort. I know that they're right, and that if I got the money into my own hand it would be gone to-morrow. I should be off to Monte Carlo like a shot; and, of course, it would go after the other. There is but one thing would redeem me."

"What's that?"

"Never mind. We won't talk of it." Then he was silent, but Harry Annesley knew very well that he had alluded to Florence Mountjoy.

Then Harry went, and Mountjoy was left to the companionship of Mr. Merton, and such pleasure as he could find in a daily visit to his father. He was at any rate courteous in his manner to the old man, and abstained from those irritating speeches which Augustus had always chosen to make. He had on one occasion during this visit told his father what he thought about him; but this the squire had taken quite as a compliment.

"I believe, you know, that you've done a monstrous injustice to everybody concerned."

"I rather like doing what you call injustices."

"You have set the law at defiance."

"Well; yes; I think I have done that."

"According to my belief it's all untrue."

"You mean about your mother. I like you for that; I do indeed. I like you for

sticking up for your poor mother. Well, now you shall have fifty pounds a month; say twelve pounds ten a week as long as you remain at Tretton, and you may have whom you like here as long as they bring no cards with them. And if you want to hunt there are horses; and if they ain't good enough you can get others. But if you go away from Tretton there's an end of it. It will all be stopped the next day." Nevertheless he did make arrangements by which Mountjoy should proceed to Buston, stopping two nights as he went in London. "There isn't a club he can enter," said the squire, comforting himself, "nor a Jew that will lend him a five-pound note."

Mountjoy had told the truth when he had said that nothing was a comfort. Though it seemed to his father and to the people around him at Tretton that he had everything that a man could want, he had in fact nothing,—nothing to satisfy him. In the first place he was quite alive to the misery of that decision given by the world against him, which had been of such comfort to his father. Not a club in London would admit him. He had been proclaimed a defaulter after such a fashion that all his clubs had sent to him for some explanation, and as he had given none and had not answered their letters, his name had been crossed out in the books of them all. He knew himself to be a man disgraced, and when he had fled from London he had gone under the conviction that he would certainly never return. There were the pistol and bullet as his last assured resource; but a certain amount of good fortune had awaited him,—enough to save him from having recourse to their aid. His brother had supplied him with small sums of money, and from time to time a morsel of good luck had enabled him to gamble, not to his heart's content, but still in some manner so as to make his life bearable. But now, he was back in his own country, and he could gamble not at all, and hardly even see those old companions with whom he had lived. It was not only for the card-tables that he sighed, but for the companions of the card-table. And though he knew that he had been scratched out from the lists of all clubs as a dishonest man, he knew also, or thought that he knew, that he had been as honest as the best of those companions. As long as he could by any possibility raise money he had paid it away, and by no false trick had he ever endeavoured to get it back

again. Had a little time been allowed him all would have been paid;—and all had been paid. He knew that by the rules of such institutions time could not be granted; but still he did not feel himself to have been a dishonest man. Yet he had been so disgraced that he could hardly venture to walk about the streets of London in the daylight. And then there came upon him, when he found himself alone at Tretton, an irrepressible desire for gambling. It was as though his throat were parched with an implacable thirst. He walked about ever meditating certain fortunate turns of the cards, and when he had worked himself up to some realisation of his old excitement, he would remember that it was all a vain and empty bubble. He had money in his pocket, and could rush up to London if he would, and if he did so he could no doubt find some coarse hell at which he could stake it till it would be all gone; but the gates of the A—— and the B—— and the C—— would be closed against him. And he would then be driven to feel that he had indeed fallen into the nethermost pit. Were he once to play at such places as his mind painted to him he could never play at any other. And yet when the day drew nigh on which he was to go to London on his way to Buston, he did bethink himself where these places were to be found. His throat was parched, and the thirst upon him was extreme. Cards were the weapons he had used. He had played *écarté*, piquet, whist, and baccarat, with an occasional night at some foolish game such as cribbage or *vingt-et-un*. Though he had always lost, he had always played with men who had played honestly. There is much that is in truth dishonest even in honest play. A man who can keep himself sober after dinner, plays with one who flusters himself with drink. The man with a trained memory plays with him who cannot remember a card. The cool man plays with the impetuous;—the man who can hold his tongue, with him who cannot but talk; the man whose practised face will tell no secrets, with him who loses a point every rubber by his uncontrolled grimaces. And then there is the man who knows the game, and plays with him who knows it not at all! Of course, the cool, the collected, the thoughtful, the practised, they who have given up their whole souls to the study of cards, will play at a great advantage, which in their calculations they do not fail to recognise. See the man

standing by and watching the table, and laying all the bets he can on A and B as against C and D, and, however ignorant you may be, you will soon become sure that A and B know the game, whereas C and D are simply infants. That is all fair and acknowledged; but looking at it from a distance, as you lie under your apple-trees in your orchard, far from the shout of "Two by honours," you will come to doubt the honesty of making your income after such a fashion.

Such as it is, Mountjoy sighed for it bitterly;—sighed for it, but could not see where it was to be found. He had a gentleman's horror of those resorts in gin shops, or kept by the disciples of gin shops, where he would surely be robbed,—which did not appal him,—but robbed in bad company. Thinking of all this he went up to London late in the afternoon, and spent an uncomfortable evening in town. It was absolutely innocent as regarded the doings of the night itself, but was terrible to him. There was a slow drizzling rain, but not the less after dinner at his hotel he started off to wander through the streets. With his great-coat and his umbrella he was almost hidden, and as he passed through Pall Mall, up St. James's Street, and along Piccadilly, he could pause and look in at the accustomed door. He saw men entering whom he knew, and knew that within five minutes they could be seated at their tables. "I had an awfully heavy time of it last night," one said to another as he went up the steps, and Mountjoy, as he heard the words, envied the speaker. Then he passed back and went again a tour of all the clubs. What had he done that he, like a poor Peri, should be unable to enter the gates of all these Paradises? He had now in his pocket fifty pounds. Could he have been made absolutely certain that he would have lost it, he would have gone into any Paradise and have staked his money with that certainty. At last having turned up Waterloo Place, he saw a man standing in the doorway of one of these palaces, and he was aware at once that the man had seen him. He was a man of such a nature that it would be impossible that he should have seen a worse. He was a small, dry, good-looking little fellow, with a carefully preserved moustache, and a head from the top of which age was beginning to move the hair. He lived by cards, and lived well. He was called Captain Vignolles, but it was only known of him that he was

a professional gambler. He probably never cheated. Men who play at the clubs scarcely ever cheat. There are so many with whom they play sharp enough to discover them, and with the discovered gambler all in this world is over. Captain Vignolles never cheated; but he found that an obedience to those little rules which I have named above stood him well in lieu of cheating. He was not known to have any particular income, but he was known to live on the best of everything as far as club-life was concerned.

He immediately followed Mountjoy down into the street and greeted him. "Captain Scarborough, as I am a living man!"

"Well, Vignolles; how are you?"

"And so you have come back once more to the land of the living. I was awfully sorry for you, and think that they treated you uncommon harshly. As you've paid your money, of course they'll let you in again." In answer to this, Mountjoy had very little to say; but the interview ended by his accepting an invitation from Captain Vignolles to supper for the following evening. If Captain Scarborough would come at eleven o'clock Captain Vignolles would ask a few fellows to meet him, and they would have—just a little rubber of whist. Mountjoy knew well the nature of the man who asked him, and understood perfectly what would be the result. But there thrilled through his bosom as he accepted the invitation a sense of joy which he could himself hardly understand.

On the following morning Mountjoy was up for him very early, and taking a return ticket went down to Buston. He had written to Mr. Prosper, sending his compliments, and saying that he would do himself the honour of calling at a certain hour.

At the hour named he drove up at Buston Hall in a fly from Buntingford Station, and was told by Mathew, the old butler, that his master was at home. If Captain Mountjoy would step into the drawing-room Mr. Prosper should be informed. Mountjoy did as he was bidden, and after half an hour he was joined by Mr. Prosper. "You have received a letter from my father," he began by saying.

"A very long letter," said the Squire of Buston.

"I dare say; I did not see it, and have in fact very little to say as to its contents. I do not know indeed what they were."

"The letter refers to my nephew, Mr. Henry Annesley."

"I suppose so. What I have to say refers to Mr. Henry Annesley also."

"You are kind; very kind."

"I don't know about that; but I have come altogether at my father's instance, and I think indeed that in fairness I ought to tell you the truth as to what took place between me and your nephew."

"You are very good; but your father has already given me his account;—and I suppose yours."

"I don't know what my father may have done, but I think that you ought to desire to hear from my lips an account of the transaction. An untrue account has been told to you."

"I have heard it all from your own brother."

"An untrue account has been told to you. I attacked your nephew."

"What made you do that?" asked the squire.

"That has nothing to do with it; but I did."

"I understood all that before."

"But you didn't understand that Mr. Annesley behaved perfectly well in all that occurred."

"Did he tell a lie about it afterwards?"

"My brother no doubt lured him on to make an untrue statement."

"A lie!"

"You may call it so if you will. If you think that Augustus was to have it all his own way, I disagree with you altogether. In point of fact, your nephew behaved through the whole of that matter as well as a man could do. Practically, he told no lie at all. He did just what a man ought to do, and anything that you have heard to the contrary is calumnious and false. As I am told that you have been led by my brother's statement to disinherit your nephew——"

"I have done nothing of the kind."

"I am very glad to hear it. He has not at any rate deserved it; and I have felt it to be my duty to come and tell you."

Then Mountjoy retired, not without hospitality having been coldly offered by Mr. Prosper, and went back to Buntingford and to London. Now at last would come, he said to himself through the whole of the afternoon, now at last would come a repetition of those joys for which his very soul had sighed so eagerly.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. I. THE TOWN.

I WANT to preserve some memento, something to the truth of which I can vouch, of the village life of England in the first half of the century. My village and the shapes with which I mean to people it, will be found commonplace enough; but as the memory of them is yet fresh and green, I will commit it to writing at once; for surely such people, such manners, and such tone of thought as I shall describe, will soon be as extinct as the bustard on our heaths, and the otter in our streams. When we look back at the England of Mr. Pickwick, with its famous country inns, its humours of travel, and its quaint local characteristics, we are tempted to believe that it must have lain nearer in date to the time of the first of the Georges than to our own day. "Can it be that Englishmen were ever as jolly as the people we read of?" is a question future generations will have good reason to ask. They were. I, who have known them, can testify to the fact; but they are changed now, and the reason of the change is easy to find. Nowadays we are all of us being gradually and imperceptibly ground down into the same likeness by the application of those forces of Nature which formerly were allowed to run to waste. The driving straps of the great grinding mill twist and glide into the remotest corners. Now every village has its post-office; every tenth one has its telegraph; every twentieth one its railway-station; and in the small market towns, to which perhaps two copies of a London daily paper might formerly have found its way, local journals take root and flourish. But even these are not *bonâ fide* local productions. The outside sheets containing the general news are printed in London and sent to hundreds of other towns besides, and the inside is made up of the feeblest small beer chronicle, made more piquant here and there to the local appetite by gross personalities and would-be caricatures of the more prominent inhabitants. More than once I have heard people lately come back from the Continent deplore the decay of picturesque local costumes in France and Germany. "All the peasants dress like the townspeople now," they declare. I am old-fashioned enough to sympathise with them in their regret, but I will ask them to join me in my lament over the same decay—much more complete, alas! and rapid—of the provincialisms of our native land.

I am not going to mourn unreasonably because Time is working with us after a fashion of his own, and not consulting my taste in the matter. Maybe he is working all for the best. These rugged individualities, these rough diamonds of humanity were no doubt the product of a life isolated and ever turning round in its own little circle. If a breeze from the great town world, or from strange countries beyond the sea, should come to ruffle their halcyon calm, it never called up anything like a desire of change; rather a sort of incredulous wonderment that men could live, and work, and grow old in a state of life so different to their own. The stranger was closely and suspiciously scanned, let him come in what guise he would. The old Romans used one and the same word to describe the stranger and the foe; and the people I shall have to deal with had certainly been fostering old Roman prejudices all their lives without knowing what they did, just as M. Jourdain talked prose.

I have never yet met anybody able to tell me why Shillingbury should have attained the size and dignity of a market town rather than Bletherton on the one side and Pudsey on the other. The same road ran through them all, and they all stood beside the same river, a river useless for purposes of navigation, and only remarkable from the fact that it converted a large acreage of good land into sour valueless bog, by reason of the string of dilapidated water-mills (which barred its current. The largest and most pernicious of these mills stood just outside Shillingbury, and perhaps it was on account of this bad eminence that it became a market town, while Bletherton and Pudsey languished on as poverty-stricken villages. At any rate, I can find no better reason.

And as a market town it was a very presentable little place. The main street was clean and bright, broadening out in the centre of the town into the market-place, where The Black Bull on one side, The Crown and Anchor on the other; the chemist's shop, with its red, and blue, and yellow bottles; Mr. Springer's, the watch-maker's, with two gilt French clocks in the window; Mr. Tawner's, the saddler's, with its wonderful show of brass harness and huge bundles of carters' whips; Mr. Yardley's, the draper's; and several other well-furnished shops, made a brave show, especially on market days, when the stock would be set out to the best advantage.

Our market day was a great event in the

old times. Early in the morning the roads on every side would be pervaded by droves of bullocks, some of them with their coats still beplastered with the mud of their Highland pasture, and flocks of sheep and lambs. Then about ten the farmers would begin to come in, and a dozen or so of pedlars, higglers, and quack-doctors' stalls would be set up in the market-place. The real business of the morning, the buying and selling in the cattle-market, was in itself a matter of too great importance to those concerned to be hurried over with inconsiderate haste.

"Well now, how are ye, Mr. Gotts? I ha'n't seen ye this never so long. And how's the good lady?" would be the preliminary greeting of Mr. Tom Hooper, a dealer, who had three-score sheep to sell.

Mr. Gotts returned the hand-shake with interest, remarking that he, himself, was "middling," and that the missis was "finely," the latter adjective being the one always used to describe ladies who had recently made an addition to the population. Mr. Hooper then went on:

"Ah, that's all right; and I suppose you don't happen to know anybody as want three-score good shearlings, do you, Mr. Gotts?"

Mr. Gotts here shook his head gloomily, remarking that he was sure he didn't, that shearlings was a very bad trade just now, and that he couldn't think what folks, as had got any to sell, was a-going to do with 'em.

Now all this was simply Macchiavellian fencing. Mr. Gotts wanted three-score sheep, and Mr. Tom Hooper knew this just as well as Mr. Gotts did himself; but had he gone boldly up to the pen, bid a fair price for the sheep, and bought them, after a five minutes' parley, he would have been made unhappy ever after by the haunting regret that he had not stood out for sixpence a head less. It would be wearisome to describe the gradual progress from commentary speeches as to the excellence or demerits of the sheep in question, to actual bargaining: the protestations of the seller that they were as cheap as dirt, and that he would not take a farthing less; the firm conviction of the buyer that they were as dear as poison, and that he would "go to sea" before he would give a farthing more. There was a bargain in the end; so it is probable they both gave way a little; but they wasted much time and told a heap of untruths over it.

Some people are inclined to rail at the dishonest habit of bargaining which prevails in foreign countries. I myself have bought mosaics in Florence; brass work, fresh from the rasp, but proclaimed genuine antique by the vendor, in Venice; filagree silver in Genoa; coral at Naples; and Turkish embroidery in the Cairo bazaars; and I unhesitatingly affirm that I have had to spend more time and tell more lies over the purchase of a dozen bullocks in an English market than in any of my dealings in a foreign land.

About one o'clock there would be a pretty general adjournment for dinner. The larger farmers, the millers, and merchants who came in for the corn market in the afternoon, would dine either at The Black Bull or The Crown and Anchor. There was an "ordinary" at each, consisting of roast beef and boiled mutton one week, boiled beef and roast mutton the next by way of variety. The masses of meat disappeared rapidly, for dyspepsia was an ailment not much known in the days of which I am writing. The stomachs must indeed have been robust which could stand a weekly drench of the port which our landlords provided for their market-day customers.

Once The Crown and Anchor did make the daring innovation of serving soup at the beginning of dinner—the landlord had recently married a young woman from London—but he soon discovered that the times were not yet ripe for such a change. After a few dinners, the guests at The Crown and Anchor began to be conscious that a quart or so of fluid to begin with did not quicken their appetites for the solids which were to follow, and when the patrons of the rival ordinary began to ask them jestingly how they liked being choked off with mutton broth, a hint was dropped to the host that beef and mutton were Englishmen's food, and though slops and such-like might do for town gentlemen, Shillingbury folk could very well get on without them.

Our shops depended almost entirely for their business on the country people who came in on market days. By the force of long habit our traders came to believe that they had a sort of right to the custom of the district, so much so that when a scheme was mooted to connect Shillingbury with the county town by a line of railway, a thrill of horror and despair ran through the bosoms of our leading retailers. Ruin to the town, swift and speedy, was pre-

dicted. The money which now flowed into Shillingbury would henceforth, all of it, go and be spent in the city. I fear this panic showed that the profits of retail trade must at that time have been a little excessive, certainly it seemed like it when a worthy grocer got up to speak at an indignation meeting, and suggested that if the worst should come and the railway be made, a clause should be inserted in the Bill to fix a minimum fare of one pound sterling for the journey between Shillingbury and the obnoxious metropolis.

The railway came in due course, and Shillingbury has not merely held its own. It has spread and prospered. We have a new corn-exchange, and new gas-works; our leading tradesmen have now plate-glass windows to their shops; and The Crown and Anchor has started a billiard-room. Poor old Figgins, no doubt, was sincere when he predicted our commercial downfall. What would he say, I wonder, if he were alive to know that one can go to London now in less time, and for about the same money that one would have had to spend in going to the county town in his day. And Figgins did not stand alone. There were many of the same mind, but they thought of the great heart of England only as a huge, cruel-hearted, blood-sucking spider, snatching at everything it could draw into its web, and giving back nothing. It has taken some of our money, no doubt, but this money we have laid out with our own free will, and we have had our money's worth in return.

I once ventured to hint to old Mr. Figgins that his prophecy of evil had not been exactly fulfilled, but he gave me a pitying smile, observing that all was not gold that glittered, that I was a very young man, and that I should find his words would come true if I lived long enough.

But enough of Shillingbury in general. I want you to know it, not by descriptions of its church, its town pump, or its national schools, but by making the acquaintance of a few of its more noteworthy inhabitants who were already well advanced in life when I was a boy, and of these I will begin to speak in my next paper.

THE HALLS OF THEMIS.

MERRILY rang the bells of St. Martin, and nobody seemed to care a rush whether he or she owed three farthings or any larger sum, or to fear any summary process for its recovery, for were not law and justice

taking a holiday, and all the world out in the streets to witness the gay and unusual sight? To judge from the dense crowds which settled in full swarm upon the streets and open places, not Royalty alone, which was about to pass, was in high favour and popularity—for that, of course, goes without saying—but also the complicated hierarchy of the High Court of Justice, towards whom it would be difficult to account for any emotional feelings. Not that justice in its higher manifestations is likely to be unpopular in an English crowd. Even malefactors have rarely any ill-feeling towards the judge who condemns them, and we are told that the lower ranks of evil-doers are rather proud of earning a sentence from a real judge; a throb of honest pride that no quarter sessions' conviction, or magisterial summary, has the power to awaken. But then we hardly expected enthusiasm, while here was a crowd closely packed and jubilant, ready to give the heartiest welcome to anything in the way of scarlet robes and judicial wigs. A sentiment perhaps rather loud than deep, but something at all events to be thankful for, as showing a healthy kind of circulation in the body politic.

And then the occasion was unique—such a house-warming has never occurred, has hardly been possible hitherto, in our domestic annals. All our judges under one roof, the various streams of justice that diverged so many centuries ago, soon to be united and flow onward in the same channel, everything brought back to that one royal court that was the origin of all! And the Sovereign herself resuming her curule-chair—if it isn't curule let some civilian who knows put us right—anyhow resuming her justice-seat for the moment, a moment in which we may dimly see, as in the witches' cauldron, a long line of kings and queens, with gold-bound brows, that ball and sceptre carry!

That suprememoment when the Attorney-General requested of Royalty permission to inscribe the event of the day on the record of the Supreme Court, is described by my friend Bagsby, who is proud to say that he was present, as being extremely thrilling to the legal mind, Bagsby being a country solicitor in whom a latent spirit of romance shows itself in investing professional matters with a certain roseate hue. But Bagsby would have gone farther in the way of ceremonial, he would have had the Queen actually to have taken her seat on the Queen's Bench. Something

might have been moved, an application in Doe versus Roe, an allusion that would have touched many hearts, and revived the memory of the grand jurisprudence of the mighty ones of old.

Bagsby's daughter is with him. Miss Bagsby is a rather nice young woman, with a complexion that recalls the hawthorn blossom, refreshing in this atmosphere of gloom. Miss Bagsby then does not seem at all impressed by her father's enthusiasm.

"The proper way—the only really nice way of opening the Law Courts, would be for the Lord Chancellor to give a ball—here in this hall—the grave law-keeper himself to lead the brawls, while seals and maces dance before him." "It would be heavy going over the stones," objects young Bagsby, who is supposed to be the cicerone of the party. The youth is finishing his legal training, with his father's agents in Lincoln's Inn; but inclines much to fiddling and theatre-going. And young Bagsby suggested that a musical dramatic performance, a precedent to be found in the masquing of the Templar students of old, say Trial by Jury, with an orchestra of young solicitors, would be the most appropriate house-warming ceremony. And there is yet time for either of these suggestions to be adopted. For the pot-hook is not yet hung, nor has the kettle begun to sing, in the new home of justice. Instead of the soft murmur of legal pleadings, we have the noise of carpenters at work, the ceaseless ring of the upholsterers' hammers.

But to leave the great hall—as yet without a name—a hall that suggests a cathedral nave, without its glory of light and shadow, and with a certain poverty of effect in its groined roof, let us leave the great hall and try to find our way through the maze. One dim vault-like passage succeeds another, with peeps into dungeons, and here and there narrow secret stairs and iron grilles that cause a shudder. However, a workman picks us up wandering in this stony labyrinth, and guides us to our destination, which is number nine hundred and ninety-nine, or thereabout, in the great quad. And the great quad is something of a disappointment; for in a quadrangle your mediæval artist is seen at his best, what with gargoyle and flying buttress, and pinnacle and turret, and quaint oriels and high-peaked roofs; but here all is brick-

work with white stone facings, not attractive in tone. A handsome range of legal factories, but nothing more.

However, thanks to an obliging though much worried clerk of the works, we are provided with a guide, who is to take us over this five-acre field of masonry, beginning with the extreme east end, where legal business has for some time been transacted. There is something inspiring indeed in the notion of a paymaster-general, ensconced in yonder corner, with the millions at the back of him of suitors' money, who will pay out that snug little fortune of ours, when we get it, with so much sang-froid; of the Bank of England established over there—the mighty institution bottled up into so small a compass—where we may turn our paymaster's cheque into crisp new notes. The stamp-office, too, a branch of Somerset House, where you may speedily disburse that snug little fortune—and a good many such go that way—in judicature stamps. But yonder are the Bluebeard chambers, where judges sit and write disagreeable orders, which dispose of liberty and livelihood at the scratch of a pen. And higher up, up those stairs which resound with the constant shuffle of feet, stairs haunted by ill-looking money-lenders, Jew and Gentile, and a sort of people mostly keen of eye and sharp of claw, there you may take out writs and judgments and the like, or register bills of sale, or in some way or other make your fellow-creatures uncomfortable.

At the head of each staircase stands an official in uniform, in aspect something like a prison warder; one of a new corps of officials who are to supersede the ushers and criers, and other minor officials of the courts. Our warder is stern enough now, turning back everybody who hesitates or falters in his steps. Soon, perhaps, he will be soothed and tamed by the amenities of his position; he will fetch parcels for judges' wives, or ride a cock-horse with a young hopeful of a judge on his shoulders, on the way to find papa, or learn to smooth with dexterous fingers the silken folds or the bombazine of queen's counsel or portly senior; he will learn slang, perhaps, from the junior bar; or even come to tossing with lawyers' clerks for drinks. However, we are led past these stern sentinels, and find ourselves on what is called the court floor—the floor above the basement we lately passed through—a gloomy basement which, although actually

above the general surrounding level of the street, successfully assumes the air of an underground crypt.

Yes, here is the judges' corridor, roomy and gloomy, with judges' rooms on one side all ready for occupation, but not yet actually occupied. Miss Bagsby looks around with feminine curiosity at the massive oaken chairs, with their red sealing-wax-like leather seats, reminding one of the House of Lords' dignity without comfort; at the mediæval grate, where a fire is burning cheerily; at the mediæval cupboard, where the judge will keep his wig and gown, no doubt; with a hasty glance at the mirror inside; a mirror which, perhaps, will be long ere it has such a pleasant reflection to give back as this pretty, glowing face with the bloom of the wild rose upon it. On the other side of the corridor, we have Courts without end—half-a-score of them, that is, with as much difference between them as in the same quantity of oysters; some a little bigger than others, and differently marked on the shell; but very much alike in tout ensemble after all. So many rows of seats for the bar, a well, of no great depth but of ample capacity, for the solicitors; a big box on the left for the jury, and a small one on the right for the witness under examination; the judges' platform and canopy, all neat and handsome in oak panelling. High at the other end the public gallery, constructed to hold forty or fifty people; but reached by a corridor which has no apparent communication with any other part of the building. So that it is objected that when the stranger drops in who happens to be the very man who can upset the forged will, or prove the secret marriage on which the fortunes of certain amiable creatures depend, there will be no possible way of getting him into the witness-box unless by the other spectators knotting their handkerchiefs together and letting him down.

Now Bagsby père did not think much of this objection, but the daughter was evidently struck by it; her tender heart was distressed at the notion of the rightful heir being kept out of his rights from such a cause, and then Bagsby himself suggested the case of a man like Mr. Weller, senior, who persisted in making unauthorised remarks—how awkward it would be not to be able to have him down on the floor of the court and commit him for contempt. "Oh, you don't have us there," cried our guide knowingly; "there mayn't be no visible

way down, but yet there is a way." And he led us to a staircase and showed us that the core of the winding stair was itself hollow, and contained a narrow corkscrew stair that led to realms above and below. "So as if a man for cause is promoted from the strangers' gallery to the floor of the house, there's the means to get him down," repeats our guide triumphantly.

This point satisfactorily settled, we march along more gaily, although there is nothing exactly gay about the scene—the long corridors dim and dimly lighted, with here a coil of hot-water pipes, and there a hydrant locked up in a glass-case. "There are forty-eight of these hydrants about the place," explains the guide, "and if by chance there was alarm of fire, and nobody's got a key handy, all you've got to do is just to dash your fist through the glass." Exactly, but then it isn't everybody who would sacrifice his fist in the cause. "Well then, your boot you might," replies our cicerone with slight scorn. "But what is the good of having them locked at all?" "Why, for fear the judges should get playing with them and squirting water over each other." Miss Bagsby laughs, but her father looks serious, as if he thought that the majesty of justice was invaded by such suggestions.

With that we came to the end of the building looking out on Carey Street, with a glimpse of Portugal Street with its associations of Insolvency Commissioners, and the rest. A once respectable neighbourhood that had gone down in the world, and now comes to the surface again, hardly knowing itself in its new position, and likely to be improved altogether out of existence in course of time, to reappear in the shape of Elizabethan flats and Queen Anne chambers.

The other side of the great hall is similarly constituted to this: a row of courts, a double row of corridors, judges' rooms all round, and here and there rooms for consultations and conferences, a barristers' robing-room, and a fine room which hereafter may, perhaps, become a library, but which is more likely to be absorbed in the growing demand for courts. For looking at the total area of the building, the Court-space is hardly in full proportion, and already there is an outcry for more Courts, and workmen are at work altering and widening, and driving an opening here with chisel and mallet through thick walls of stone, and brick, and concrete in

this building which has just come complete out of the contractor's hands.

And with that we come back to the great hall, and look down upon it from the gallery, which is on the same level as the courts, and we speculate vaguely as to the footsteps that will some day throng over those tessellated floors—the lost footsteps of the future—hearing dimly, as it were, in some sea-shell, the rush and clatter of unborn generations.

And then we dive down into the lower floors to see what our guide facetiously terms the machinery for packing juries; how the jurors are carefully filtered through one gate, and left to cool in a bath-like apartment lined with glazed tiles, and then marched as they are wanted, upstairs and downstairs, and everywhere except into the judge's chamber. But then they have a special gallery in each court where they are permitted to take the air—a gallery which, on days of anything like excitement, is sure to be crammed with the fair friends of the litigants. And we dive down into cellars, still more gloomy and subterranean, to have a glimpse of furnaces and boilers, and a labyrinth of pipes.

But upon this Bagsby declares that he feels as if there were a weight of many tons of masonry on the top of his head, and is sure that for nights after this in his dreams he will have to support the whole Palace of Justice on his chest. And, indeed, we all find the place rather fatiguing, and are glad to find ourselves once more in the life and bustle of the Strand in search of light refreshment, and turning our backs on the solemn and gloomy Palace of Justice.

A QUESTION.

DID you know I came to meet you in the night,
Came lone and wearily,
Where the tall trees in the cold uncertain light
Beckoned me eerily?
Did you know I stood there, love,
Where the stars gleamed thick above,
And all around and all below,
Lay the moonlight, white as snow;
And a silence deadly still,
Seemed the very air to fill,
Only through the mystic hush of this, our trysting
hour,
The love that binds us two, in its plentitude of
power,
Watched with me cheerily?

Did you, far away, through all those leagues of
space,
Hear me calling?
So very still and noiseless was the place,
The sere leaves falling,
Falling from the branches bare,
Falling through the frost-locked air,

Falling to their mouldering bed,
Dead things nestling to the dead,
Almost seemed to start to sound
The hushed world that slept around;
All was dumb on earth, and sky, and field, and
fell,
Yet my spirit called upon you through the spell
Us both enthralling.

Did you hear me, did you answer me, mine own?
To outward seeming,
This spirit bond we wove for us alone,
This union teeming
With the vivid fire of youth,
With the steadfast soul of truth,
With the power to endure
While life is love and faith is sure,
Is a thing as vague and wild
As the fancies of a child.
Yet, my darling, in the midnight standing lonely,
In the power love has lent and lends us only,
I trust our dreaming.

"WAS IT SUCCESS?"

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

DURING a certain August, when England lay in a haze of sunshine, a purple island in a golden sea, the great screw steamship Indiana was on her way home from Calcutta to Southampton, as fast as steam could bring her.

The passengers who lounged away the time on her white decks, and fed often and copiously in her gilded saloons, found their days pleasant enough, and flirted, smoked, and gossiped with an invigorating assiduity. They were all fairly prosperous people, each pleased with himself, and tolerant of his neighbour, as a man is apt to be under the soothing influence of a good balance at his bankers, and the impossibility of the said neighbour claiming any portion of it.

Comfortable Anglo-Indians! Patriotic, jaundiced colonels! Dear fair English girls who volunteer so nobly to enliven the banishment of our poor countrymen, the million blessings of the grateful Hindu are filling the sails of your ship to hurry you on to your well-earned repose!

Conversation on board ship becomes excusably monotonous; when therefore for the fifteenth time that week Dr. Teggett said to Mrs. Carden, "So you are going home to see your little daughter—eh?" she did not snub him, but subduing an inclination to yawn, replied as she had done fourteen times before:

"Yes, indeed, doctor, and I am afraid I shall find her a big daughter now!"

Dr. Teggett had been trotting up and down the deck, ruminating on many things, until driven to Mrs. Carden's side, as to a place of refuge from the repeated onslaughts of the dozen children who

rampaged around him; their manifold imperfections becoming hourly more glaring to every eye but the maternal one. Mrs. Carden, he knew, could put on a bright repellent stare capable of quelling the most turbulent little creature on board.

So he came and stood beside this lady, and with his thumbs thrust into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, slowly swayed himself to and fro, now on his heels, now on his toe-tips. He looked down on her in kindly but depreciatory fashion, as though he were saying in his soul, "You may be a nice little woman, still you have the misfortune to be neither Dr. Teggett nor yet a butterfly;" for he had a hobby, and that was the pursuit, capture, asphyxiation, and final classification of winged insects, and he considered that a man in possession of so fine a collection as his own was a man to be both envied and admired.

Nevertheless, he found nothing fresher to say to Mrs. Carden than his usual remark about her return home to visit her daughter, and she having given her answer, went on with the needlework at which she was sewing, quite unruffled by her old friend's scrutiny. In her youth Mrs. Carden had been much looked at by many men, and no amount of concentrated staring could now make her raise her eyes unless she chose. She was a woman whom women described as "So charming!" and two men had believed her to be the most perfect of her sex. Sacred to the memory of her second husband were those black bows which were scattered so profusely over her pretty white gown.

Near to Mrs. Carden stood an empty chair, which she had been using as a work-table, but now her work-things were on her lap, and the doctor hastened to secure a comfortable seat.

"I think I'll sit down if you will allow me," he said; and he sat down, first, however, removing the chair out of arm's-length of the lady. He was very prudent in his dealings with women.

Mrs. Carden laughed unfeelingly.

"That is quite too bad of you," she said.

The doctor was somewhat confused, but being a man of quick resource he skilfully changed the subject.

"And so you are going home to your little girl," said he; "is it not probable you may find her a dangerous rival?"

Mrs. Carden put a stitch or two into her work, and then spread it out on her knee. She was embroidering an "R" in the corner of a handkerchief, and pensively considered the effect of the final flourish.

"Well," she remarked, "Rosie would not consider you very complimentary. I am sure when I was eighteen I should have been indignant had anyone compared me to an old woman of forty."

The doctor sucked in his lips and blew them softly out again, while he carefully elaborated the compliment which the occasion required. With him gallantry was not spontaneous; it had been cultivated by many years of application as a necessary professional adjunct.

"A lady's word as to her age must not be gainsaid, otherwise, my dear madam——"

The doctor's "otherwise" implied unutterable things; almost, that judging from her appearance he should have taken her to be just the age of her daughter.

"I am no longer open to flattery," said Mrs. Carden, smiling nevertheless. "With a great grown-up Rosie in England impatiently waiting for me to bring her out, I think it is time to grow old gracefully."

Here occurred a regular stampede of children who, like all little Anglo-Indians, were of the most unruly and obnoxious description of childhood. Calmly assuming that the doctor and Mrs. Carden had been placed there by a special decree of Providence for the express convenience of their young friends, the said young friends began in a wild follow-my-leader sort of fashion, to cut the figure eight around and between this obliging couple, nor did they desist until they had upset Mrs. Carden's cottons, and drawn tears of agony from the doctor, by dancing heavily over his corns. Then, satisfied with their prowess and daunted by Mrs. Carden's gaze of wrath, they decamped for happier hunting-grounds.

"How dreadful children are!" said Mrs. Carden, with a pretty shake of her ruffled plumes; "do you know I am so glad Rosie is grown up, although it does make me feel so old; but at least she has got over mumps and measles and general obstreperousness."

"Ah, to be sure; and yet youth is the golden time—the golden time, ma'am," said the doctor, shaking his head retrospectively; "why, when I was young the

world was a very gay place indeed. But as the poet says :

"Ah, woeful when !

Ah, for the change since now and then !"

"Yes," said Mrs. Carden ; "then I was waltzing half the night through, now I am going to take my place among the dowagers. Does not it seem dreadful ? And yet, do you know, I am quite longing to act the part of mamma ! When Rosie was little I don't think I cared for her a bit, but latterly maternal instincts have awakened in my breast. I think it is Providence giving me a new interest in my old age." Then her eyes fell on the black ribbon on her sleeve, and she added with decorous gravity : "Of course she can never replace for me dear Mr. Carden."

"Oh, it is a capital thing to have something to interest you," said the doctor. "Now, I have my collection. I shall have a great deal to do arranging that systematically ; it is not a thing to be done in a hurry, as you might suppose ; it will require a great deal of thought, and a very great deal of organisation."

Mrs. Carden gave a little inaudible sigh. Why were people so egotistical, and so wrapped up in their own concerns ?

"How interesting it will be !" she said with fervour. "You must let me bring Rosie to see all your Indian spoils some day. I do so wonder what she has grown like ! You know it is nearly eight years since I saw her. Does it not seem strange ? But I had other ties ;" and she pensively fingered her ribbons. "Of course Mr. Carden did not feel towards the child as I did. I wonder if she is like me or her father. You remember poor James ?"

"Ah, to be sure, poor Jim M'Kay," snorted the doctor mournfully ; "a very pleasant fellow too, brought me the Papilis Panthous, I remember ; got it from a man in Ceylon I think it was. Quite by chance, of course ; was attracted by its size, did not even know its name until I told him. 'My dear sir,' I said, 'that is the Papilis Panthous !' and I never saw a man take anything so coolly in my life ! He had a wonderful power of repressing his feelings—wonderful power !"

Mrs. Carden, too, showed a wonderful power of repressing her feelings, which were getting irritated. But she had a motive for cultivating Dr. Teggett ; he was "well connected." It will be found that this magical phrase casts a halo over many a prosy bore and washed-out in-

sipidity, and renders their acquaintance desirable.

So Mrs. Carden looked up with all the pathetic archness that had become her so well two decades ago (how the little tricks of a pretty woman outlive the prettiness !).

"I hope Rosie is like my poor Jim," she said ; "it will quite bring back to me the dear lost days. Look, I have her photograph here, doctor, but it was taken so long ago that you will not be able to judge from it."

She took a locket off her watch-chain, and Dr. Teggett gave the dim and blurred little portrait it contained a polite inspection, but it inspired him with nothing fresher to say than, "Very nice, very nice indeed," and even that he would have retracted on the rack. Mrs. Carden too, put to the question, must have admitted that up to three months ago her daughter's photograph had lain forgotten in a desk where she had put it years before ; for up to three months ago Mrs. Carden had been the happiest woman in Calcutta, moving in the still glorious, though outer circles of viceregal society, with a house in the Chowringhee Road, and a smart victoria, and a husband who, when not engaged in the law courts, was almost as devoted as in the first days of marriage. Under these circumstances Mrs. Carden was naturally rather apt to forget the existence of her little girl over in England.

But Mr. Carden's death put a stop to all these good things, and it was a happy thought which suggested that Rosie would now furnish her with a new interest in life, and she took up the idea with the same tenacious eagerness which she would formerly have devoted to the inauguration of a picnic or of a masquerade.

"I think Rosie must feel very impatient with me," she said presently. "I think she must be sick of school. I know I hated school. But then I was such an idle girl."

"You are very industrious now," said the doctor ; "I never see you without some bit of work in your hands."

"Oh, that is my devotion. I am marking Rosie some handkerchiefs ;" and she held out for inspection the "R," round which she was dotting a circle of rosebuds.

The doctor nodded his head sagaciously.

"You'll have to be adding another letter to that soon," said he ; "Miss Rosie will be leaving you before long. Ah, young ladies are like butterflies ; once they feel their wings, they are off."

Mrs. Carden smiled a little; she did not want to keep Rosie permanently to herself; she considered a grown-up unmarried daughter a humiliating possession.

"I want Rosie to marry," she said. "I have been so happy myself as a wife," and she dropped a suitable little sigh to the memory of two husbands, "that I must not be selfish, and grudge the same happiness to Rosie. I only hope that she may be as fortunate as I was."

And Mrs. Carden sighed again, but this time it was a sigh of regret that she had been fool enough to refuse in early youth a certain Mr. Hodson Bowles, because he wore mauve trousers, and derived his money from the manufacture of dolls' eyes. Yet now he was a knight, an M.P., and enjoyed twenty-five thousand pounds a year; and she had made this blunder all for the want of a little friendly coercion.

Rosie, she was determined, should make no such mistakes; and gazing out over the sea, she forgot the presence of the doctor, and indulged in the most pleasing anticipations of triumphs and festivities, where her child would be surrounded by innumerable young men of the bluest blood and most satisfactory incomes; and finally she arranged a fashionable marriage, and read a long description of it in the *Morning Post*. Poor little woman! I even think she decided on the very costume she would wear on that interesting occasion, and was deep in the comparative merits of frillings and gaugings, when the doctor's voice broke in on her bright fancies.

"Yes, to be sure," he said musingly, for he too had forgotten his companion, and was pursuing his meditations aloud, "young ladies are like butterflies, only more dangerous, more dangerous. Now it requires some courage to begin such a collection of butterflies as mine is—some courage, and a great deal of industry and perseverance; but I don't know that any man would have courage enough to make a collection of young ladies. You never know where you have them; they are not stable—no, not stable. Once you have your butterfly you can fix it; though to be sure, the colours fade a little; but I think I may say I have discovered a process which preserves them better than anything yet known. However, my dear lady, this is a secret just at present, later on I have some intention of publishing a little pamphlet on the subject, and until then I would rather not have it mentioned."

Mrs. Carden laughed.

"You may certainly trust me," she said with warm sincerity. "I know nothing whatever about butterflies, and so am not likely to care to display my ignorance."

"Ah, to be sure!" said the doctor; "you know the Indian proverb, 'Ignorance is an ornament to women,' and yet on this occasion I cannot help regretting it. The study of *Lepidoptera* is one of the noblest on earth, as the butterfly is the most favoured of created things. There is a passage which I read as a young man, and which I could repeat to this day, in which the butterfly is described as excelling in beauty the light of any of the most famous gems that ever from the brow of Eastern tyrant dazzled the dark eye of a trembling slave." The doctor rolled out these words with great complacency, and lingered approvingly over the last "Yes," he said, "to be sure, 'dazzled the dark eye of a trembling slave.'" And he repeated the passage through again from the beginning. "You and Miss Rosie must come and see me in London, and then we will go into the subject together."

Mrs. Carden thanked him prettily, but felt that the conditions of life would have to undergo some radical changes before she took to the study of *Lepidoptera*. In her succeeding conversations with the doctor, she very delicately kept him away from the subject of butterflies, and confined him to more human interests. Women are said to be very receptive, but Mrs. Carden assimilated none of his entomological enthusiasm, while she managed by unflagging perseverance to awaken in his breast a sort of lukewarm interest in her unknown Rosie, until he began to believe in a hazy way that this young person was destined for a very elevated station indeed, and once he found himself mentally cataloguing his treasures in the futile hope of finding something comparatively valueless to him, and yet sufficiently handsome, if given as a wedding-present, to reflect some credit on the donor.

When the *Indiana* reached Southampton, and her passengers dispersed, the doctor took leave of Mrs. Carden with many good wishes, and he carried away with him the remembrance of a smiling, radiant little woman in the best of spirits and the neatest of mourning toilettes.

Ten days after this, when Dr. Teggett had forgotten all about the little widow and her hopes and interests, for the Cardens and their affairs formed no integral

portion of his life, he, like the rest of us, having business, and pleasures, and family connections quite apart from theirs—one day then, when he stood at the bookstall within Victoria Station, deep in the perusal of Punch, which he had taken up from the counter, he heard a woman's voice, familiar to him, enquiring for a Norwood train. He looked round and recognised Mrs. Carden. He hurried towards her.

"Hi, sir!" cried Mr. Smith's representative with asperity, "are you going to pay for that Punch?"

Dr. Teggett found he had inadvertently carried the paper off with him. He went back and returned it with urbanity, for, having studied the cartoon, he saw no reason why he should buy it. The young man, however, muttered uncomplimentary things; he completely misunderstood the doctor's motives, and failed to see anything praiseworthy in this little trait of thrift.

"This is a surprise," Dr. Teggett said, taking Mrs. Carden's hand, "a pleasant surprise to be sure! And how are we, dear lady?"

But Mrs. Carden looked spiritless, and her forehead was set in frowns.

"I am very well. I am glad to see you," she said, but her voice was as inanimate as her expression.

"How is the lovely Miss Rosie?" he asked gallantly.

Mrs. Carden's brown eyes glittered with tears.

"Oh, doctor," she said, "I am heart-broken."

Dr. Teggett experienced a sensation.

"Lord bless me!" he said, horrified, "you don't mean to say the child's gone?"

"Gone!" said Mrs. Carden pettishly; "where could she have gone to? or do you mean dead? How can you think me so ridiculous?"

"My dear lady, really from your manner I feared something serious."

"And it is serious. It's just as bad as it can be. Oh, I shall never forgive myself for not coming in time to save her."

"Good Heavens! has she run away with the dancing-master?" ejaculated the doctor, fairly aghast.

Mrs. Carden was extremely irritated; she felt she should weep outright before all the spectators, if the doctor offered one such remark more; and yet she felt an absolute necessity to complain to someone of the hardness of her fate.

"Can you spare me the time?" she

said; "will you come with me to Norwood? I am going to see Rosie, and—and I do so want to talk to you."

So thus the doctor unexpectedly found himself again on a journey with Mrs. Carden, and this time in a condition of acute curiosity. He clucked with impatience while she was settling herself with every regard to comfort in the corner seat, while she took off her gloves, and gave each of her rings a little twist; he grunted when she slowly wiped her eyes with a scented handkerchief, and then carefully replaced it in the bosom of her dress, with the embroidered corner hanging out. At last she was ready, to his intense relief.

"No, she has not run away," she began sadly. "I wish she had. I mean I wish she had the chance. But no one will ever want to run away with her! Doctor, she she is awful—dreadful! Oh, you could never believe she is my daughter."

It crossed the doctor's mind that the young lady must have a beard, or perhaps a pig's face, but fortunately Mrs. Carden interrupted him before he could form the idea into words.

"I was never so upset in my life," she said, "as when I first saw her. You know, doctor, what I had been expecting, what I had a right to expect, and then imagine coming into the room a great, awkward, heavy thing, rude, sullen, and insupportably shy. And to think she is eighteen, and I was going to bring her out!"

Mrs. Carden gave a sob and buried her face in her handkerchief.

"Bless my soul, what an affliction!" murmured the doctor. "Poor M'Kay was a well-formed fellow, too! Weak lungs, but otherwise well made. Perhaps it was a fall in her childhood?"

"She was all right in her childhood," cried Mrs. Carden petulantly. "It's the abominable way she has been brought up. Imagine putting her with a horrid, canting, sanctimonious woman like Miss Haver-son! I shall never forgive old Mrs. M'Kay for ruining my poor child so shamefully. I only wish she were alive, that I might tell her what I think of her. But poor James sees it all, I dare say, and she probably regrets her conduct by this time."

Mrs. Carden, now well embarked on the story of her woes, sailed sorrowfully on, and the doctor, while throwing in an occasional "Lord bless me!" wandered off into mental speculative enquiries as to whether the soul of the departed James M'Kay did

see and deplore the personal appearance of his daughter, and whether, if so, he had found a means to make the soul of his departed mother regret her share in the transaction. Yet Dr. Teggett very sincerely sympathised in Mrs. Carden's disappointment. Since women are created for ribbons and admiration, it is certainly a terrible thing to meet with a girl unable to appreciate the one or to obtain the other.

"It was just there she stood, doctor," said Mrs. Carden, when the two Anglo-Indians found themselves shut into the drawing-room of Miss Haverson's Select Establishment for Young Ladies. It was in a large room of an exceedingly silent, well-regulated house—a room devoid of colouring, with a depressing white paper, and drab holland covers to the chairs, the monotony of its walls only broken by gilt-framed specimens of the striking ill uses to which time and a lead-pencil may be put. "It was just there she stood," said Mrs. Carden, "and 'never made the slightest movement towards me."

Dr. Teggett examined the particular square of carpet as though he expected to see some trace of the young lady's presence.

Mrs. Carden sat down with her back to the light, a study of prosperous despair.

The doctor trotted about and examined the view from the two windows, of which one looked out on to the gravel-drive in front of the house, the other over a lawn and shrubbery at the side. Across this lawn ran a troop of noisy children, led by a tall girl, whose short petticoats, together with the vigorous use she made of her limbs, gave her a somewhat comic appearance. Her face was hot and happy, and she romped with as much energy as the smallest follower in her train.

The doctor looked on with that pensive pleasure peculiar to age when watching the gambols of youth. He thought of his own school days, and not having read "Vice Versâ," he perhaps indulged in that time-honoured wish that he himself was a boy once more.

Someone entering the room behind him caused him to turn from the window. A lady was advancing towards Mrs. Carden, whose usually pretty expression was replaced by an exceedingly disagreeable one. She shook hands coldly and murmured a grudging introduction: "Dr. Teggett—Miss Haverson." Then she sat down again and looked as blank as she possibly could.

Miss Haverson made a movement as though to take a place on the sofa by her side, but finding that her visitor made no attempt to withdraw her spreading skirts, she quietly took a seat elsewhere.

"Dear Rosa is in the garden," she said, looking alternately at Mrs. Carden and Dr. Teggett with gentle deprecation. "Since she received your letter this morning she has been unable to settle quietly to work, and yet she is a very good industrious child as a rule, though a little excitable."

While Miss Haverson was speaking the doctor examined her covertly through his glasses. Mrs. Carden's animadversions were fresh in his mind. He saw a thin mild-looking gentlewoman on whose pale face sectarianism and ill-health struggled for pre-eminence. Her age was uncertain, her figure angular, her dress homely; but these details were obscured by a certain soft earnestness of manner, which, combined with the persuasive, rather lingering tones of her voice, betrayed a soul accustomed to much spiritual wrestling.

"Your little people seem to be enjoying themselves out there," said the doctor, who felt bound to say something, since Mrs. Carden was so deeply engaged in studying the curtain-poles.

"I trust they are all happy here," said Miss Haverson, turning to him. "To-day I have given them extra play-time on Rosie's account, because she is so soon to leave us. They will all regret her very much, and it is a grief to me. But, as I tell them, her right place is now with her mother. I hope—nay, I am confident, madam, that she will prove the same comfort to you that she has been to us."

Mrs. Carden gave a little stare.

"Rosa is very far from perfect," she said coldly.

"Which among us is that?" said Miss Haverson. "Yet the ground is well prepared, and we must wait trustingly for the harvest. Rosie is a true Christian. She has always found her best reading in The Book."

The speaker's mild eyes turned confidently to her hearers for approval. Mrs. Carden had listened perforce, but her small amount of sympathy was expressed very clearly in her listless expression and weary figure. The doctor polished his spectacles on his silk handkerchief and shook his head thoughtfully. He had never associated with very religious people, and where he was ignorant he was naturally suspicious.

Gay shouts from the garden attracted Miss Haverson's attention.

"I will go and fetch Rosie in, if you will excuse me," she said, rising. "She will be so glad to know you are here."

The gentle lady stepped out by the side-window, walking delicately, with her stuff gown carefully gathered up lest it should be soiled by contact with the grass.

"Ridiculous woman!" said Mrs. Carden, who watched her for a moment and then returned to the sofa. She felt too full of resentment to talk. Dr. Teggett remained by the window and saw the children rush out again from behind a clump of laurels, and the big girl pounce on Miss Haverson and hug her vigorously. He had a presentiment that this girl was "Rosie." There was much noise and laughter from the little group, but presently all the younger children returned to their games, only the big girl remained, and she, with an arm placed protectingly round the governess's waist, came slowly towards the house. They did not make for the open window, but skirted a corner of the lawn and disappeared behind an angle of the wall. The doctor resumed his seat by Mrs. Carden. She still wore her mask of frigid abstraction, and he said a few words to cheer her. Then, all at once, he was irresistibly tickled at the odd turn things had taken; that he should find himself administering consolation on the very subject which only three weeks before had exhausted all her adjectives to extol, struck him as sufficiently amusing; he would have pointed it out to her, but he reflected that no woman can ever see the humorous side of a situation which is displeasing to herself.

Footsteps were heard along the hall, and the door was thrown open.

"Do please go in first! Oh, do, please!" said a husky voice.

Miss Haverson entered and paused.

"Come, dear child," she said, turning back, and then someone seemed to tumble in, the door shut to with a bang, and a big, black-browed girl, burning with blushes down to her finger-tips, stood just within the room, and made no effort to advance.

Miss Haverson gave her a gentle push forward.

"Go and welcome your dear mamma," she said.

Mrs. Carden got up, mournfully willing to be embraced, but her daughter only held a cheek ungraciously towards her, so she was obliged to place a kiss where best

she could, and this was on a red ear and bit of tangled hair.

"Will you not shake hands with Dr. Teggett? He is a very old friend of mine, and has been kind enough to come and see you."

The girl extended an unwilling hand and withdrew it instantly; then she plumped down into a chair as far as possible from her mother, and twisted her long red fingers nervously together.

Mrs. Carden watched her ungainly movements with poignant distress.

"How do you find Rosie looking?" enquired Miss Haverson confidently. "I think she had a little bit of a cough when you were here before, but to-day she has got all her colour back."

"With interest," thought the doctor, examining through his glasses Miss Rosie's face, purple with blushes from brow to chin.

"I can't tell how she is looking," said Mrs. Carden peevishly. "How does she generally look? Does she often get colds?"

"It is only this last year she has suffered from them. I think it is because she is growing so fast. Stand up, dear child, and let us see how tall you are."

The girl rose for an instant, and then dropped back into her seat with a scowl. Her face was round and dark, and her thick black eyebrows lay across her forehead like a bar. The muscles of her mouth twitched nervously as she wound her fingers together, or pulled at a pleat in her dress. Certainly, thought the doctor, an unpromising piece of material out of which to fashion one of next season's debutantes.

"Dear me!" sighed Mrs. Carden, "you must promise not to grow any more, Rosa, or I shall be quite afraid to take you home with me."

"I say, Miss Haverson," said the girl in an eager, audible whisper, "I am not going away from here, am I?"

"Certainly not at present," said her mother; "until you have some decent clothes I should be very sorry to have you with me. But that will only be the affair of a couple of weeks, I suppose."

"Oh, Miss Haverson!" muttered Rosa in a choking voice, while strange convulsive movements passed over her face.

"My love, you are no longer a child," said Miss Haverson persuasively; "it is time for you to take your place with your mother in the world."

Rosa suddenly began to sob with great earnestness and noise.

A woman's tears are popularly supposed to appeal to our tenderest sentiments, yet the audible weeping of this big girl, her short petticoats, thick ankles, and reddening nose, excited, I regret to say, in the doctor's breast an unmanly inclination to smile.

"What an odious exhibition!" murmured Mrs. Carden as she gathered up her little possessions, and shook out her flounces. "I am quite ashamed, doctor, you should witness it. I cannot compliment you, Miss Haverson, on Rosa's good sense. She is ridiculously childish!"

Mrs. Carden swept from the room with much dignity.

"I am so grieved, dear madam," said Miss Haverson, following her out into the hall; "but, indeed, you must not feel discouraged. When Rosa has overcome her timidity, she will, I am sure, be a good daughter to you. She is a very affectionate child."

"I am very much discouraged," retorted Mrs. Carden; "I have been miserably taken in!" and then she made the gentle lady an elaborate bow and departed. But when alone with the doctor her dignity broke down, and she gracefully shed tears into her scented handkerchief.

"Is she not awful! hopeless! dreadful!" she cried, alluding to Rosa. "Did you notice her coarse hands and feet? her hideous black hair? And then what a deplorably loose figure! Oh, my dear friend! what have I done to be so abominably treated? Fancy coming all the way from India for the sake of a girl like that! I declare I shall let her stay at school for the rest of her life!"

JACK.

IN the midst of writing on a very different subject, it suddenly occurs to me, both as a duty and a relief, to take another sheet of paper and say a few words about Jack.

He is only a poor toad, and not a rare or "scientific" toad, either; not quite *Bufo vulgaris*, certainly, but only one step above it, *Bufo calamita*, our only other English representative of the genus, or, in good old Anglo-Saxon, a "natterjack." I purchased him at the beginning of the summer within the classic precincts of Seven Dials, a locality which has many pleasant early reptilian reminiscences for me, though its prolonged survival in its

present aspect is assuredly one of the foulest smears on the map of civilisation's progress in London. Why I bought him I should be puzzled to say. "Better have a natterjack!" urged the dealer from whom I was getting a little stock of salamanders, tree-frogs, and other small deer, for a fernery; "better have a natterjack in with 'em!" he repeated, in spite of my asseverations that I wanted nothing of the sort. "Genelman bought two here last month; says he never had such fun in his life, and they comes out every morning on his breakfass-table and eats worms off a plate, tame as Christians. You'd much better have a natterjack, sir!"

So, without exactly seeing how existent conditions in general were to be ameliorated by such acquisition, or pausing to reflect on the domestic economy of the gentleman whose keen sense of humour led him to breakfast with his vermivorous protégés, I suffered myself to be overpersuaded, and Jack, fished up from the depths of a turf-basket and brought to light with that air of tranquil surprise on his face which distinguishes his kind, was tumbled into the can, where he immediately burrowed comfortably under the remonstrant gradientia, and made himself at home. "What is the difference between a natterjack and a common toad?" I asked the good woman, while her husband had dived down through a trap-door into some fetid abyss beneath the shop in quest of meal-worms. "Why, it's a different specie, of course!" she returned in a somewhat injured tone; "natterjacks is sixpence, and commoners is only a penny!" Here, however, a ventriloquial sort of voice below was heard to declare that the choicer reptile displayed a yellow stripe down the back; presently adding, as the owner's head rose to the surface—by way, as I understood it, of apology for the scanty zoological information conveyed in the definition that "natterjacks is sixpence," and at the same time inferring competent authority in himself—that "the missus didn't know much."

Be that as it may, I do not regret the investment of that humble coin. Jack is of a retiring disposition during the day-time, and remains buried at the very bottom of the case, so that, although an outward and visible sign of his existence is occasionally manifested by the progressive waves of a small earthquake

among the sods of grass and ferns, he cannot be said to add much to the sociability of the household; indeed, if any attempt be made to dig him up, he resents such interference in the most marked manner, and if unsuccessful in eluding fingers which excavate in his wake, he will even "swelter," that is, cause that acrid moisture to exude from the glands on the skin of the back which constitutes a toad's sole means of defence when attacked, and the appearance of which is always a sign of irritation. But late at night, when all is quiet and I am writing here alone, he comes up and sits on a pinnacle of cork at the top of the case, looking at me through the glass; and the gleam of his little palpitating silver throat, twinkling out of the deep shadowy recess of the window, catches my eye as I glance up from my work.

I say "looking at me," because there is nobody else for him to look at. Let not the reader imagine that I mean to assert that Jack behaves any differently towards me individually to what he would in the case of other people who handled him kindly, and with respect to his batrachian prejudices. I don't suppose for an instant that he knows me or distinguishes my voice from that of any other person; to do so would be to overrate the poor brute's degree of intelligence. Nor is his conduct to be looked upon as the result of any great amount of taming which has been exercised; toads are always tame enough from the first—at any rate, they necessarily always appear to be so, since their opportunities for expressing emotion of any kind are exceedingly limited. Of one thing, however, I am persuaded, and that is, that he has learned to associate my rising and coming towards him with the idea of liberty—for I have long since recognised Jack as a character in his small and unpretentious way, and his nocturnal promenade has become an institution. When he sees me coming, he rises on his hind-legs and paws the glass excitedly, his sheeny mottled lavender-grey vest standing out in bright relief from the blackness behind; but no sooner have I opened the case than he subsides again into a squat ball, and wrinkles up the skin at the back of his head. Why is this? Because I always greet him with a gentle friction of his loose rugose integument—on the same instinct, I suppose, that leads one to pat a dog or stroke a cat; but I am afraid that Jack has no very high opinion of this form

of salutation. At any rate, he ejaculates "Warr!" as if much relieved, when it is over, and climbs hurriedly on to my hand, for conveyance to the table. But it not unfrequently happens that he is by no means presentable at this stage, newly risen as he is from the subterraneous peregrinations of the day, and adventitiously clothed with a thick envelope of mould, the possible transference of which to my MS. would by no means enhance its likelihood of editorial acceptance. An old shaving-brush and a damp cloth, lying in readiness at the bottom of the waste-paper basket, have therefore become part of the institution, and he submits to be washed and dusted with a ludicrous assumption of docility, shutting his eyes and screwing up his face like a child under similar circumstances when the passage of a soapy palm over its countenance is impending. And now follows the reward of virtue, in the shape of half-a-dozen of those clean curly little maggots known as meal-worms.

Did you ever see a toad eat? It is the most absurd performance. First, a reflective look at the animated victual (it must be alive) over one shoulder, as it were—suggestive of being suddenly struck by an idea that the subject might be worth consideration. Secondly, conviction that there is something interesting about it, and a closer and prolonged inspection. Thirdly, hesitation, obvious depreciation, and doubt, now sitting bolt upright to ponder over the matter, and alternately raising and depressing the head in examination of the wriggling theme, with an action that reminds one irresistibly of an old gentleman looking over and under his spectacles in order to get a better view of some object. Lastly, smack! the tongue is shot out with a loud click, the meal-worm vigorously swept into the mouth with the fore-feet, a visible throb of deglutition, a Dover-to-Calais sort of movement of the shoulders which seems to presage the immediate rentrée of the victim into society once more (it does sometimes, but only as a temporary respite), a solemn ten-second wink, and the thing is done. Half-a-dozen more than satisfy Jack's appetite, as a rule occasionally, when about to shed his skin he refuses them altogether. I do not supply him with any food when he is at home, but I regret to say he abused my confidence the other day by wantonly devouring a litter of slow-worms which unfortunately introduced themselves to his notice in the cage—a fact which makes me

now suspect that he knows something about the unaccountable disappearance of a tiny but rare and beautiful African *amphisbœna* some time ago.

Two things have a perennial attraction for him: the lamp and myself. He will sit up and regard the former with bright-eyed palpitating attention for an hour at a time; then, slewing round—for, such is a toad's triangular shape, that it has to describe the arc of quite a large circle aft in order to turn its head—he stares at me with the same fixed, earnest speculation. Finally, he either settles rotundly down to cogitate upon it, or walks straight off the table, going over the edge without a moment's hesitation, and proceeding across the floor, not a bit disconcerted by his fall, as soon as he pulls himself together. There is a business-like and purposeful integrity about Jack's course which always seems to imply a definite aim in life, very different from the here-there-and-everywhere gadding of certain frivolous green frogs which are his abhorrence. He is the creature of circumstance only in the direction in which he is originally launched; when once started, he goes right ahead with a deliberate emphatic hand-over-hand kind of gait, turning neither to the one side nor the other, and never looking back. If he encounters any obstacle in his path (such as the wall, for instance), he makes a desperate effort to surmount it; failing that, he sits down, with a calm and unprejudiced air, to wait—possibly, since time is no object to a toad, till the side of the house shall crumble in the fulness of years.

He goes his own way and I go mine, until it is time for both of us to retire to bed. Neither of us disturbs or interferes with the other. Sometimes I hear him scrambling in a distant corner, and sometimes he runs against my feet accidentally when they happen to be situated in his line of march. If I put my hand down he will clamber on it and squat there contentedly, though I do not flatter myself that there is any higher motive for his doing so than the vulgar physical warmth of the situation. Occasionally he remarks, "Warr!" in some unexpected quarter, and I respond, "Well, Jack?" but beyond this we are not conversational. Nevertheless, he imparts a certain sense of companionship—just enough, and no more, under the circumstances. A dog or cat provokes caresses, talk, and various distractions prejudicial to work; the most

trustworthy of monkeys or 'coons is a source of anxiety; while, on the other hand, a live bird is about as entertaining as a stuffed specimen at night. Even a pet serpent is not above suspicion; its head may be dozing quietly on one's shoulder while the other end is capsizing something afar off. But Jack is free from guile, doing no mischief and making no noise. He suits me, and I think I suit him. And I am grateful to this poor uncouth reptile for the odd moments of amusement or diverted idea which have relieved weary hours of urging the reluctant quill over ever exigent foolscap.

"Come, Jack! Bedtime, my boy." I shut up shop for the night and go in search of him. I never have any trouble to find him. He does not come to me, but he does not avoid me either; indeed, I generally discover him engaged in that abstruse contemplation of me already mentioned. Up he gets on the hand which is lowered in front of him, settles himself down composedly thereon, apparently for all time, until—suddenly recognising the ferns and grass which spring up around him—he scuffles off, and chanting the burial-service with a final "Warr!" inters himself with all possible expedition.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II. CHAPTER VII. IN THE TOILS.

EVERY bough and spray of the trees in the White House garden was glittering with a new and lovely foliage—a gift of passing beauty bestowed by winter's hand—born in a night, and liable to perish with the first breath of thaw. Shining crystals gemmed the grass, and each gable of the old house was outlined by an exquisite garniture of frost.

"We are going to have a cold Christmas," said folks to one another, and boys grinned at the happy prospect of slides to be made for other people to fall down upon.

But the river that ran, swollen and turgid, at the bottom of the White House garden, would give no one the chance of gliding serenely over a frozen surface—not it.

A very low degree below freezing-point was needed to stay that river in its course, and silence its rush and swirl; and even when winter did succeed in making a captive of it, were there not always

pitholes that meant treachery, and lying in wait for the unwary, and a deep place here and there under overhanging boughs that Becklington mothers shuddered to think of?

To-day it ran black and deep, swollen from the autumn rains; and in the perfect stillness that ever broods over a frost-bound world, its low murmuring voice seemed to come close to the ear like the echo of the sea in a shell.

A faint ruddy light came from behind a pile of fleecy clouds in the west, glowed through the high oriel window of the White House library, and, touching the dancing bobbins on Hester Devenant's lace-pillow, turned them ruddy, too, as well as the finger-tips that moved them so deftly to and fro, over and under, across and back again.

When the Becklington public had thought it the right and proper thing that Gabriel Devenant's widow should turn her skill in lace-making to good profit, she had disappointed expectation by never being seen with a bobbin in her hand.

Now that she had been "made a lady of" by some mysterious means known to none—now that she had servants to do her will and a fine house above her head, she had all at once developed a strange love for cushion and dancing bobbins.

Did this fancy on her part arise from a certain hatred of idleness born of her early life of activity? Was thought wont to be so active in her busy brain that active fingers kept welcome pace with it, even while they left it free? Any way, yards of lace, fine as cobwebs, came from that busy loom, while the grave face that bent above the active fingers might have been Penelope's.

Hester made no error in the intricate pattern pinned on the blue silk pillow on her lap, and yet her grave eyes lost no passing look that crossed the face of the man who sat opposite to her.

We say man advisedly, for, though elderly people in the town still sometimes spoke of him as the boy Davey, Davey was in the seven-and-twentieth year of his life, and though still something of a "weakling," not one whom any person of ordinary penetration could judge to be a man lacking in the truest manliness—in moral courage, that is, and power of character.

It was still possible that many might say as they had said of yore, that "summat ailed Davey, though yo' could na ca' him a *crookback*."

A stoop in the broad shoulders, a peculiar way of carrying the head, a certain pathetic expression in the pale blue eyes, a lanky length in the thin nervous hands, marked Davey as something different to his fellows; but there was nothing effeminate in the face itself, and much that was winning and tender, though the mouth and chin were hidden by a soft growth of beard, veiling the smile that came but seldom, and was more felt than seen.

"How distinctly you hear the river on such a day as this," said Mrs. Devenant; "it is as if everything else went far away and only that came near."

"Yes," said Davey; "the falls just above are full after the rains."

But he spoke as though he were listening more intently for some other sound than that of the falls, and his eyes turned wistfully towards the door.

"Hilda is gone to the vicarage," said Mrs. Devenant quietly; "she will not be back till late, and then Mr. Deane will bring her home."

Hester spoke with the strange gentleness that she gave to Davey and to none else; the gentleness that, as a boy, he had counted as a thing infinitely precious, and that now, as a man, he held even dearer still.

For he thought she had read his heart; that she knew how beautiful a thing life was growing in his eyes, how the sound of a voice, and the echo of a step, made such music for his ears as seemed more the melody of heaven than earth; and how the smile and the step were both her daughter Hilda's.

It must be surely that she read his heart aright, since she could read his thoughts so well!

Had she not answered one but now? Had he not been longing for that closed door to open, and let his fair young love pass in, and had not Mrs. Devenant, kindly cruel, told him she was gone?

For that day at least the White House was doomed to be for Davey a casket without its jewel, a cage without its bird.

He strangled a little sigh in its birth.

With so gracious a hostess surely it were most ungracious for a guest to be glum?

But soon Davey had no temptation to gloom; soon his eyes were shining with an eager interest, his hands pressed one in the other as he talked.

For they spoke of Mr. Geoffrey. To the rest of the world he might be Squire Stirling—Mr. Stirling of Dale End—what the

world would. To Davey he was always Mr. Geoffrey. Only one other name for him existed in Davey's vocabulary of love, and that was "Master."

"I keep hoping things may be better now," he said nervously, warming his hands at the blaze.

"Now Mrs. Geoffrey is dead?" put in his companion, and tap, tap, went the bobbins on their silken bed.

"Oh no, no. I did not mean that," said Davey breathlessly. "What I do mean is this: there are some natures which can bear any kind of suffering better than suspense—waiting for a thing is worse than facing it. Well, I think it is so with my master, and that the fear, the watching, the anxiety of his wife's last illness told upon him terribly. Mrs. Devenant, in all that I have thought and felt about him from the time I was a boy you have been the one, of all the world, to show me most sympathy. You know all that is in my heart about him, do you not? You know how, all my life long, I have thought and dreamt of how he came into his uncle's room, bearing me on his shoulder, laughing, taking me under the shelter of his care, as it were, from that hour, and I not thinking all the while. Without him, I might have been cast out into the world like a mere straw upon a flood, to have drifted I know not where. 'Never forget, lad,' said Mother Susan when she was dying, 'never forget as Maister Geoffrey kep' yo' in the bank, whether or no, and saved me and Dickory fro' breakin' our 'arts after our boy.' And I never do forget, though I hardly think Mr. Geoffrey knows how well I remember. Once, I had been telling Master Ralph the story (he was a little fellow then, and loved to hear a tale told in the twilight)—well, when he and I went into Mr. Geoffrey's room a little later, he ran up to his father, and 'Dad,' says he, 'I'm glad you didn't let them send Davey to the poor-house.' Mr. Geoffrey looked up from his book, puzzled for a moment, and then his face grew all bright—you know how it grows like sunshine when he smiles?—and he held out his hand to me, and 'Davey,' he said, 'I think I did myself a good turn that time, as well as you; what do you think about it—eh?' It made me so happy, Mrs. Devenant, to hear him speak like that; my heart grew so full as I listened, standing there with my hand in his, that I could find no words to answer him—not one! It is a

long time ago now—a long, long time—but I shall never forget it: how the child climbed upon his father's knee, and put his arms about his neck, and how Mr. Geoffrey held out his hand for mine. I seemed to be drawn so near the two of them—who were themselves so close together—that I could never get far from them any more. When all that terrible trouble came, it seemed as though I were struck through them—the father and the son—always together in my mind; always, as it were, two in one."

"And yet," said Mrs. Devenant, "they are often separated now; young Ralph is oftener away than at home."

"Yes," said Davey, his delicately traced brows knitting in a sort of hazy trouble. "I know, and I often fear the master is lonely without what makes the whole place seem full of light and happy sounds when it is there. There are people like that, you know, people who make you feel as if all the world is light and warm, just because they are in it, and you are near to them."

Mrs. Devenant looked up a moment, then down again with a faint smile softening her mouth.

Was he not in truth laying his heart bare? Did she not know he was thinking of Hilda as he talked? Did she not hold in her hand the magnet that should draw him to the White House when she would, and—as love that has hope to live upon never stands still, but must ever be taking a step forward—would not the power of the magnet grow until all other influences, however potent, should pale beside Hilda's?

"If this is so," said Hester, passing over unnoticed the concluding rhapsody of Davey's last speech; "if Mr. Geoffrey misses the bright presence of his son so much, is it not strange that he sends the boy roaming all over the world?"

"Yes; I have often thought so."

"What do you think is his reason for so much self-sacrifice?"

"I cannot tell."

Tap, tap, went the bobbins on their silken bed, having all the talk to themselves for awhile, since the other two kept silence.

Davey, leaning his head upon his hand, watched the wood embers fall and glow.

And, though the bobbins never ceased their soft low clatter, Hester Devenant watched him keenly for a moment or two.

Then she broke into new ground:

"How glad you were when Mr. Geoffrey

made old Anthony his steward! Such a letter as you wrote me, Davey! And yet I could not help fancying you felt as if you were forgotten—still doomed to add up the corn-merchant's books, with your heart up at Dale End, with master and agent."

"Perhaps I did, but I was sure Mr. Geoffrey would think of me in the end, and so he did, you see; and then, Mrs. Devenant, I got the best of it—didn't I?"

Davey smiled at the thought of having got the better of old Anthony, and the smile, climbing to his eyes, made them very sweet and bright, and no more dreamy and wistful as when looking at the fire.

"You mean that you live with Mr. Geoffrey?" said Hester, pushing the curtain, near which she sat, further back, for the day was waning fast, and lace-making requires light.

"Yes; Anthony has quite a fine house, and dear old Mrs. Geddes walks 'in silk attire,' but I—I am near my master always."

"You make an excellent secretary, Davey, I doubt not—so neat-handed as you are, and with such a head for figures."

"I try to be more than that to Mr. Geoffrey. I try to make up to him for the loss of Master Ralph when he is away. I watch and wait, and seize upon any little thing that comes in my way, and seems a possible thing to do for him. It makes me very happy if he seems to find any comfort in me."

"But you speak of Mr. Geoffrey as if he were one who stands in need of comfort—who is preyed upon by some secret sorrow that bears him to the ground; not as if he were—as everyone says he is—the luckiest man in all the countryside."

"Do I?" said Davey. "Have I spoken of him like that, or is it you who read the thoughts of my heart like an open book?"

"Then you have thought it might be so? You have fancied that some secret grief weighs upon his heart and conscience?"

"His heart? yes; his conscience? no. Nothing can weigh on the conscience save sin, and which of us can show cleaner hands, a lovelier life? Which of us can lay claim to having garnered up so much love, so much reverence, from those around us, as my dear master, Geoffrey Stirling?"

The bobbins no longer tapped light heels and danced upon their silken bed. The cushion was set aside. It was "blind man's holiday" now, that pleasant hour "between

the lights," when the most industrious deem it no crime to be idle awhile. Mrs. Devenant sat still, with quiet hands folded, while the cat purred on the rug at her feet, and the shadows born of fire-light began to flicker on the dark oak panels and on the low ceiling; and all the goblins on the mantel-shelf stirred and gibed in the flicker of the flame.

So still was Mrs. Devenant, so still the room after Davey had done speaking, that the rush of the river almost seemed to have come close up under the window. Like a silhouette against the long breadth of faintly-lighted casement, Davey could see the beautifully-poised head and gracious profile of the woman who had chosen him out from among his fellows, to make him her trusted friend; but he could not see her face—so rapidly had the light faded—or he might have been startled at the strange and unwonted expression it wore.

A look of pity—nay, more, of compunction and bitter regret, and yet an unfaltering, implacable resolve. So might the inquisitor of old have looked upon a young and zealous adherent of a doomed creed, regretful that the torture was inevitable, though never once wavering in the resolve to apply it.

"Davey, you are a warm lover; would you be as good a hater, I wonder?"

The words startled him, breaking abruptly as they did on the silence.

"I don't know," he said; "I never tried. It would be horrible really to hate anyone—I mean so that you would gladly bring them to shame and sorrow, or see them suffer and not try to help them, since Christ died for all."

The last five words were spoken softly, almost under his breath, as if he were touching some thought so deep and holy that it must needs be handled timidly.

Mrs. Devenant pressed back the rippling hair from her temples. She was conscious of a sense of oppression—an air surrounding her in which she could not breathe freely.

"There is such a thing as wrong that cannot be forgiven," she said, rising into sudden passion, as her way was when much moved.

"By man—yes; by God—no," put in Davey in the same hushed voice in which he had before spoken.

"God judges sin as hardly as man."

"Yes; there are some sins He hates more than others, such as pride and revenge—sins that rear themselves up

against Himself, as it were. But surely there is no sin beyond forgiveness——”

Here Davey paused, appalled at the result of his words.

“What have I said? Have I made you angry, dear Mrs. Devenant?”

He might well be aghast, for Hester, with sundry inarticulate sounds as of passionate anger but ill-restrained, had started to her feet and was pacing the room from end to end, twisting and contorting in her restless hands the handkerchief she had taken from her pocket and, for a moment, had pressed against her lips as if to stem the torrent of words that panted for egress.

Seeing that Davey was gravely perturbed, was in fact standing by the mantelshelf, the picture of mingled amaze and distress, she came to his side, laid her hand on his shoulder, and laughed.

Such a laugh that instead of being reassured by it, Davey shrank back against the sculptured goblins almost as if he were clinging to them for protection.

He had heard of Hester Devenant's temper, but never, all through the long years of their friendship, had he seen a display of it until now.

The experience was painful.

Hester's shrewd eyes read his face aright. Her influence had received a shock. Her power must be reinstated, and that promptly.

“Davey, I am irritable and out of sorts to-day. Forgive me, dear. Above all, don't talk like a Methodist; it sets all my teeth on edge.”

The grave questioning eyes seemed hard to meet, shining as they did in the firelight, and holding a strange awful something in their depths that reminded her of—yes, the look in Gabriel's, her husband's, when first he stood face to face with the demon that possessed his wife.

But Davey was coming round—rapidly, too. Who can gauge the charm of that one word “dear,” uttered by a woman so little given to caress or words of tenderness? Besides, was not Davey looking at and judging her who was Hilda's mother? The recollection of that one fact brought palliation with it, and Hester's unwonted tenderness completed the spell.

She would not speak to him like that, thought Davey, knowing as she must know all his heart, unless, knowing, she was ready to smile upon his hopes, if Hilda would.

Of that aspect of the matter Davey, as yet, dared not even trust himself to think. He was hardly reconciled to the fact of his

own boldness in daring to love that stately maid, much less could he bring himself to hope for return of this venturesome love of his.

Time alone could tell how that would be—time, and loving service upon his part, humbly laid at the loved one's feet.

Meanwhile the utterance of that one little word “dear,” seemed to Davey an omen of surpassing blessedness.

Hester had spoken it (or so he thought) just in the tone a mother might use to a well-beloved son. Was he not in very truth that in heart to her already? Why then should he be so prompt to judge her?

Thinking these thoughts he smiled, and Hester, quick to catch the happy change of mood, smiled back.

The gusty storm was over. Peace reigned once more supreme. The two stood by the fire, in close company with the gibing goblins.

“So you and Mr. Geoffrey have Dale End all to yourselves?” said Hester presently. Apparently she had as much difficulty in dragging her thoughts away from Dale End, as Davey oftentimes experienced in disentangling his from the White House and its inmates.

“Yes, but we shall not have it for long. Christmas is not far off now, and then Master Ralph will be home. It will be a sad home-coming enough for him, to find his poor mother gone and his father looking so worn and ill. But one can see how Mr. Geoffrey is looking forward to it for all that. He's in and out of the boy's room a dozen times a day, and it's always ‘we'll do this,’ and ‘we'll do that when Ralph comes.’”

“Your being away when Mrs. Geoffrey died was a pity; you might have been a great help and comfort.”

“I don't know; there is little lack of help or comfort either when the vicar or his wife are about a place. Mrs. Geoffrey couldn't bear her out of her sight, and he was with my master pretty near night and day. Old Anthony used to be there a good deal, and he says he never saw such comfort given in time of trouble. I was the best help where I was, seeing to a lot of business for Mr. Geoffrey in London.”

“You are growing quite a traveller.”

“Yes, and I like it too, and Mr. Geoffrey says I manage the business well, and to his satisfaction. I would travel thousands of miles to hear him say that at the end of it, and think nothing of the journey, that would I. This time I had pleasant company

coming home, for Amos Callender had been south, buying hides, and we travelled home together. He's a man worth listening to, with a gift of pithy speech that takes my fancy marvellous well. By the way, I saw him again a day or two ago (Mr. Geoffrey is giving a prize for window-gardening, and Old Bess is proud of her show, so I went to see the sight), and he was telling me of this foolish talk about a ghost having been seen up our way. I hope such gabble won't reach the master's ears, nor Hilda's either for matter of that. It might fright her to think of it, coming home from Mrs. Deane's of an afternoon now the days draw in so."

"Who saw this ghost?"

"Jeremy Bindwhistle first, and then three or four of them together—little Jake among the rest."

"Jake is a shrewd fellow!"

"Yes, and so is Farmer Dale an honest one."

"You say true in that, Davey. He once offered to do me a good turn. I have not forgotten. He sings hymns with a lusty voice, I can tell you."

"It would be hard to beat Jake at that game," said Davey, laughing.

"But where did they see this ghostly thing?"

"In the Dale End shrubbery, where the woodland skirts the road."

"Whose ghost was it?"

"The ghost of the man who robbed the bank, so they say."

Hester's breath began to come in little gasps, and she clutched hold of the mantel-shelf as if to steady herself.

"Why, I have frightened you with all this nonsense," said Davey with concern.

"No, no," she said; "tell me more. Why did they say it was that?"

"Because it wore a waggoner's frock, and had red locks hanging about its face, and, don't you remember, at that time

there was some talk about a man in a——"

"Yes, yes, but why did they take it for a ghost? Surely, some poor fellow on the tramp——"

"They say it had the face of a dead man, and a dead man's eyes, wide, staring, blind."

She sat down quickly in a low chair by the hearth, crouching over the fire, and leaning her forehead on her open palms.

He thought he read but too well the cause of her agitation. His own unthinking folly had brought it all about.

She was trembling from head to foot. Poor Davey could see her shadow vibrate on the wall.

He knelt beside her, pleading for himself.

"I ought not to have told you such things. I ought to have remembered how you have suffered in the past. Do forgive me before I go, for go I must—I have overstayed my time as it is."

She lifted her face to his, and there he saw—not that he had thought to see, a tearful pallid cheek and timid eye; but the glitter and fire of a fierce and cruel joy.

"There is nothing to forgive," she said, still all a-tremble, but not with fear; "I love to hear a ghost-story. When you hear more of this one, come and tell it me, and—Davey—Hilda shall listen too."

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLII. CAPTAIN VIGNOLLES ENTERTAINS HIS FRIENDS.

MOUNTJOY, when he reached Captain Vignolles's rooms, was received apparently with great indifference. "I didn't feel at all sure you would come. But there is a bit of supper if you like to stay. I saw Moody this morning, and he said he would look in if he was passing this way. Now sit down and tell me what you have been doing since you disappeared in that remarkable manner." This was not at all what Mountjoy had expected, but he could only sit down and say that he had done nothing in particular. Of all club men Captain Vignolles would be the worst with whom to play alone during the entire evening. And Mountjoy remembered now that he had never been inside four walls with Vignolles except at a club. Vignolles regarded him simply as a piece of prey whom chance had thrown up on the shore. And Moody, who would no doubt show himself before long, was another bird of the same covey, though less rapacious. Mountjoy put his hand up to his breast-pocket, and knew that the fifty pounds was there, but he knew also that it would soon be gone. Even to him it seemed to be expedient to get up and at once to go. What delight would there be to him in playing piquet with such a face opposite to him as that of Captain Vignolles, or with such a one as that of old Moody? There could be none of the brilliance of the room, no pleasant hum of the voices of companions, no sense of his own equality with others. There would be none to sympathise with him when he cursed his ill-luck, there would be no chance of contending with an innocent who would be as

reckless as was he himself. He looked round. The room was gloomy and uncomfortable. Captain Vignolles watched him, and was afraid that his prey was about to escape. "Won't you light a cigar?" Mountjoy took the cigar, and then felt that he could not go quite at once. "I suppose you went to Monaco?"

"I was there for a short time."

"Monaco isn't bad. Though there is of course the pull which the tables have against you. But it's a grand thing to think that skill can be of no avail. I often think that I ought to play nothing but rouge et noir."

"You!"

"Yes; I. I don't deny that I'm the luckiest fellow going. But I never can remember cards. Of course I know my trade. Every fellow knows his trade, and I'm up pretty nearly in all that the books tell you."

"That's a great deal."

"Not when you come to play with men who know what play is. Look at Grossengrannel. I'd sooner bet on him than any man in London. Grossengrannel never forgets a card. I'll bet a hundred pounds that he knows the best card in every suit throughout an entire day's play. That's his secret. He gives his mind to it,—which I can't. Hang it! I'm always thinking of something quite different, of what I'm going to eat, or that sort of thing. Grossengrannel is always looking at the cards, and he wins the odd rubber out of every eleven by his attention. Shall we have a game of piquet?"

Now on the moment, in spite of all that he had felt during the entire day, in the teeth of all his longings, in opposition to all his thirst, Mountjoy for a minute or two did think that he could rise and go. His father was about to put him on his legs

again—if only he would abstain. But Vignolles had the card-table open, with clean packs, and chairs at the corners, before he could decide. "What is it to be? Twos on the game, I suppose." But Mountjoy would not play piquet. He named *écarté*, and asked that it might be only ten shillings a game. It was many months now since he had played a game of *écarté*. "Oh, hang it," said Vignolles, still holding the pack in his hands. When thus appealed to, Mountjoy relented and agreed that a pound should be staked on each game. When they had played seven games Vignolles had won but one pound, and expressed an opinion that that kind of thing wouldn't suit them at all. "Schoolgirls would do better," he said. Then Mountjoy pushed back his chair as though to go; when the door opened and Major Moody entered the room. "Now we'll have a rubber at dummy," said Captain Vignolles.

Major Moody was a grey-headed old man of about sixty, who played his cards with great attention, and never spoke a word—either then or at any other period of his life. He was the most taciturn of men, and was known not at all to any of his companions. It was rumoured of him that he had a wife at home, whom he kept in moderate comfort on his winnings. It seemed to be the sole desire of his heart to play with reckless, foolish young men, who up to a certain point did not care what they lost. He was popular, as being always ready to oblige every one, and, as was frequently said of him, was the very soul of honour. He certainly got no amusement from the play, working at it very hard,—and very constantly. No one ever saw him anywhere but at the club. At eight o'clock he went home to dinner, let us hope to the wife of his bosom, and at eleven he returned, and remained as long as there were men to play with. A tedious and unsatisfactory life he had, and it would have been well for him could his friends have procured on his behalf the comparative ease of a stool in a counting-house. But, as no such Elysium was open to him, the major went on accepting the smaller profits and the harder work of club life. In what regiment he had been a major no one knew or cared to enquire. He had been received as Major Moody for twenty years or more, and twenty years is surely time enough to settle a man's claim to a majority without reference to the Army List.

"How are you, Major Moody?" asked Mountjoy.

"Not much to boast of. I hope you're pretty well, Captain Scarborough." Beyond that there was no word of salutation, and no reference to Mountjoy's wonderful absence.

"What's it to be? twos and tens?" said Captain Vignolles, arranging the cards and the chairs.

"Not for me," said Mountjoy, who seemed to have been enveloped by a most unusual prudence.

"What; are you afraid;—you who used to fear neither man nor devil?"

"There is so much in not being accustomed to it," said Mountjoy. "I haven't played a game of whist since I don't know when."

"Twos and tens is heavy against dummy," said Major Moody.

"I'll take dummy if you like it," said Vignolles. Moody only looked at him.

"We'll each have our own dummy, of course," said Mountjoy.

"Just as you please," said Vignolles. "I'm host here, and of course will give way to anything you may propose. What's it to be, Scarborough?"

"Pounds and fives. I sha'n't play higher than that." There came across Mountjoy's mind as he stated the stakes for which he consented to play a remembrance that in the old days he had always been called Captain Scarborough by this man who now left out the captain. Of course he had fallen since that,—fallen very low. He ought to feel obliged to any man, who had in the old days been a member of the same club with him, who would now greet him with the familiarity of his unadorned name. But the remembrance of the old sounds came back upon his ear; and the consciousness that, before his father's treatment of him, he had been known to the world at large as Captain Scarborough of Tretton.

"Well, well; pounds and fives," said Vignolles. "It's better than pottering away at *écarté* at a pound a game. Of course a man could win something if the games were to run all one way. But where they alternate so quickly it amounts to nothing. You've got the first dummy, Scarborough. Where will you sit? Which cards will you take? I do believe that at whist everything depends upon the cards;—or else on the hinges. I've known eleven rubbers running to follow the hinges. People laugh at me because I believe in

luck. I speak as I find it; that's all. You've turned up an honour already. When a man begins with an honour he'll always go on with honours. That's my observation. I know you're pretty good at this game, Moody, so I'll leave it to you to arrange the play, and will follow up as well as I can. You lead up to the weak, of course." This was not said till the card was out of his partner's hand. "But when your adversary has got ace, king, queen in his own hand there is no weak. Well, we've saved that, and it's as much as we can expect. If I'd begun by leading a trump it would have been all over with us. Won't you light a cigar, Moody?"

"I never smoke at cards."

"That's all very well for the club, but you might relax a little here. Scarborough will take another cigar." But even Mountjoy was too prudent. He did not take the cigar, but he did win the rubber. "You're in for a good thing to-night. I feel as certain of it as though the money were in your pocket."

Mountjoy, though he would not smoke, did drink. What would they have? asked Vignolles. There was champagne, and whisky, and brandy. He was afraid there was no other wine. He opened a bottle of champagne, and Mountjoy took the tumbler that was filled for him. He always drank whisky-and-water himself. So he said, and filled for himself a glass in which he poured a very small allowance of alcohol. Major Moody asked for barley-water. As there was none, he contented himself with sipping Apollinaris.

A close record of the events of that evening would make but a tedious tale for readers. Mountjoy of course lost his fifty pounds. Alas! he lost much more than his fifty pounds. The old spirit soon came upon him, and the remembrance of what his father was to do for him passed away from him, and all thoughts of his adversaries,—who and what they were. The major pertinaciously refused to increase his stakes, and, worse again, refused to play for anything but ready money. "It's a kind of thing I never do. You may think me very odd, but it's a kind of thing I never do." It was the longest speech he made through the entire evening. Vignolles reminded him that he did in fact play on credit at the club. "The committee look to that," he murmured, and shook his head. Then Vignolles offered again to take the dummy, so that there should be no necessity for Moody and Scarborough to

play against each other, and offered to give one point every other rubber as the price to be paid for the advantage. But Moody, whose success for the night was assured by the thirty pounds which he had in his pocket, would come to no terms. "You mean to say you're going to break us up," said Vignolles. "That'll be hard on Scarborough."

"I'll go on for money," said the immovable major.

"I suppose you won't have it out with me at double dummy," said Vignolles to his victim. "But double dummy is a terrible grind at this time of night." And he pushed all the cards up together, so as to show that the amusement for the night was over. He too saw the difficulty which Moody so pertinaciously avoided. He had been told wondrous things of the old squire's intentions towards his eldest son, but he had been told them only by that eldest son himself. No doubt he could go on winning. Unless in the teeth of a most obstinate run of cards, he would be sure to win against Scarborough's apparent forgetfulness of all rules and ignorance of the peculiarities of the game he was playing. But he would more probably obtain payment of the two hundred and thirty pounds now due to him,—that or nearly that,—than of a larger sum. He already had in his possession the other twenty pounds which poor Mountjoy had brought with him. So he let the victim go. Moody went first, and Vignolles then demanded the performance of a small ceremony. "Just put your name to that," said Vignolles. It was a written promise to pay Captain Vignolles the exact sum of two hundred and twenty seven pounds on or before that day week. "You'll be punctual; won't you?"

"Of course I'll be punctual," said Mountjoy, scowling.

"Well; yes; no doubt. But there have been mistakes."

"I tell you, you'll be paid. Why the devil did you win it of me if you doubt it?"

"I saw you just roaming about, and I meant to be good-natured."

"You knew as well as any man what chances you should run, and when to hold your hand. If you tell me about mistakes, I shall make it personal."

"I didn't say anything, Scarborough, that ought to be taken up in that way."

"Hang your Scarborough! When one gentleman talks to another about mistakes he means something." Then he smashed

down his hat upon his head and left the room.

Vignolles emptied the bottle of champagne, in which one glass was left, and sat himself down with the document in his hand. "Just the same fellow," he said to himself;—"overbearing, reckless, pig-headed, and a bully. He'd lose the Bank of England if he had it. But then he don't pay! He hasn't a scruple about that! If I lose I have to pay. By Jove, yes! Never didn't pay a shilling I lost in my life! It's deuced hard when a fellow is on the square like that to make two ends meet when he comes across defaulters. Those fellows should be hung. They're the very scum of the earth. Talk of welchers! They're worse than any welcher. Welcher is a thing you needn't have to do with if you're careful. But when a fellow turns round upon you as a defaulter at cards, there is no getting rid of him. Where the play is all straightforward and honourable, a defaulter when he shows himself ought to be well-nigh murdered."

Such were Captain Vignolles's complaints to himself, as he sat there looking at the suspicious document which Mountjoy had left in his hands. To him it was a fact that he had been cruelly used in having such a bit of paper thrust upon him instead of being paid by a cheque which on the morning would be honoured. And as he thought of his own career; his ready-money payments; his obedience to certain rules of the game,—rules, I mean, against cheating;—as he thought of his hands, which in his own estimation were beautifully clean; his diligence in his profession, which to him was honourable; his hard work; his late hours; his devotion to a task which was often tedious; his many periods of heartrending loss, which when they occurred would drive him nearly mad; his small customary gains; his inability to put by anything for old age; of the narrow edge by which he himself was occasionally divided from defalcation, he spoke to himself of himself as of an honest hard-working professional man upon whom the world was peculiarly hard.

But Major Moody went home to his wife quite content with the thirty pounds which he had won.

CHRISTMAS AT BROMPTON.

THE place was the new lecture-hall, in the new half of the Consumption Hospital, filled with pleased sick faces; it was the

new lecture-hall resounding with thin and weak clapped hands, lightened from six o'clock till half-past seven, one sloshy cheerless December evening, by the soft laugh and subdued appreciation of some two hundred consumptive invalids. Yesterday, and yesterday's yesterday, the hall had been delivered over for a hundred occasions to doctors, to students, to nurses, to dispensers, to secretaries, and sub-secretaries, full of enthusiasm and patient pains. But now, for this hour and a half, for this one of a series of winter recreations provided by charitable and capable friends, all of disease and doctoring had been swept and kept away as though it had never been; as though phthisis were not, and pleurisy were not, and hearts and lungs had no liability to get impaired, but would for ever do their duty like first-class machines; and the lecture platform had been turned into a tasteful stage; and a fine Broadwood was tastefully played by a council-friend at the moment the curtain was split in half, revealing Dot and her Baby and her Maid; and the tale of The Cricket on the Hearth was told again by persons and by personalities instead of by one voice through page and page.

There was a twitter of expected enjoyment through every ward of every floor of the new half (and the old half, too) of the Hospital for Consumption, Brompton, S.W.; there was a throb of anticipated gaiety along the whole length of the Victoria Gallery, the Lind Gallery, the Foulis Gallery, and all the other galleries which those noble buildings own besides; there was the knowledge of coming diversion throughout the "Napier" Memorial Ward, the "Lily Rider" Memorial Ward, the "Visconti" Memorial Ward, all other wards; throughout the Memorial Beds—the "Ellis," the "Samuelson," the "R. R. N.," the "Presland," the "May," the "Bonhote"—all other beds; and there was not one poor wan patient in any corner of any one of these, there was not one poor sufferer, from top to base, who did not feel the world lightened and brightened by the fact that The Cricket on the Hearth was being prepared for them to see; by the fact that generous well-wishers and managers were exerting themselves to prepare it; by the fact that no impediment—save their own decision, or their own sheer incapacity—would be obtruded to prevent them seeing The Cricket on the Hearth when the hour for the amateur performance of it came.

And it is no inconsiderable matter to be doing as much as this. Think what it is to rouse, pleasurably, a patient's mind. Think what it is to bring a smile to thin and colourless lips, on which smiles are sadly seldom seen, but in their place there is the drawing—or the dread—of weakness that is as bad to bear as pain. Patients, too, who are consumptive patients—let them be young women, let them be young men (and these are all young, see; there is scarcely a patient among them who would not wear the bloom of youth and the brightness coming from the prospect of life that yet has to be met, had not all bloom and brightness—except that that is illusory—been sapped by disease away!), consumptive patients are patients to whom little else can come than cheering, than comforts, than amelioration, and kind care, and the needed removal from the straits and perils of a penurious and an unfit home. They are not patients with a defective or an absent sense. They are not patients with delirium, with useless limbs, with bandaged wounds; patients having no power, or longing, at the moment, to enjoy; yet patients who in a regulated manner are overcoming these, with convalescence daily predicted, and entire recovery measurably close at hand. They are the patients who must have cheeriness, if only to give them chance to hope; hope, which feeds more effectually than food. And this makes it that it is good to be present when some two hundred of these poor souls are being served with happiness; that it is good to see a winter evening's weariness, or, at the least, monotony, turned into a winter evening's entertainment.

Leaving for a while hall and audience, with the murmur and the stir (and the coughs, alas!) that can break out between the "chirps" of the Carol, let us make some acquaintance with what is to the right, and to the left, and along, and over, and throughout this Brompton double hospital, in its whole area and its whole height. It is a maze; it is a labyrinth; it is an intricacy or a puzzle of floor and floor almost without a clue; for, with one half of the building on one side of the Fulham Road and the other half on the other; with this in the parish of Kensington and that in the parish of Chelsea; with accommodation for three hundred and thirty-one patients provided in the two halves combined; with accommodation for doctors, officers, nurses, porters, servants,

food, medicine, stores, appliances, business, committees, consultation from the outside; a month's knowledge might well be taken to get even the points of the compass correctly into the head.

See, here are the corridors, with a sofa here, with a sofa there; with a bust at a place or two; with a stand of palms and ferns—all warmed to the precise temperature of the wards (as is the hall also), so that patients may pass from one place to another without risk or distress. Here is a subterranean passage crossing the Fulham Road—a mere extension of a corridor it seems—joined to another corridor indistinguishable from itself, leading off by double doors into gravelled entrances; on to neat grass; into a bewilderment of offices; and it is all lighted throughout with gas, and kept at the same temperature as the rest, since patients are accommodated everywhere, and no matter for what purpose they move about, they are protected by the same care. Here are the spacious oak-benched rooms for outdoor patients; the magazines they may read as they wait; the list of refreshments they can buy (a cup of soup, or coffee, or tea, or milk, for a penny, and other food in accord); here are the taps of drinking-water to which they can help themselves; here are the railed-off places opposite the dispensary-slides, in which they have to stand as they give their prescriptions in, and whilst their medicines are prepared.

Here are the doctors' consulting-rooms, each with a retiring closet containing a dread, stiff sofa in case recumbency of an out-patient be required; containing a laryngoscope; containing, or fitted with, a night-black blind, to shut out the smallest gleam of daylight, and leave the bright gas-jet, when the laryngoscope is to be put to use, to tell its tale unmarred. Here are weighing-machines at this convenient corner and at that, that doctors may satisfy themselves whether patients are really gaining flesh, or how quickly—alas!—flesh is getting lost.

Here are special rooms, where patients for special reasons can be isolated, or treated apart, with special nurses to undertake the service. Here are lavatories, bath-rooms, simple hot-baths, the complicated Turkish-bath, baths of compressed air. Here is an inhaling room; where the atmosphere can be charged with the fumes of iodine, of kreosote, of the antiseptic essential oil of pines; where patients for

whom some one of these, or some other, is prescribed, can sit at work or reading under the influence of it, for the appointed time. Here is a second inhaling-room, where some half-dozen patients can each breathe a different vapour at once; half-a-dozen trumpet-mouthed tubes being in it differently charged, and placed where each can be comfortably used.

Here is an entrance to the lift, with its attendant; it has a freight now, of a group of giant cans, on a journey to be refilled with hot milk and hot beef-tea; it goes steadily to the topmost storey, passing the letter-boxes connected with it on each floor, from which postal matter is collected several times a day, at regulated hours.

Here are the kitchens; spacious food laboratories right up next the roof. Here are the great cauldrons of tea and beef-tea, in these great kitchens; the sister-cauldrons, all of a bright row, of cocoa, coffee, milk; of mutton (for broth, as well as for straight eating); such cauldrons having no contact with fire, either, since steam heats them, and steam heats also this immense repository for potatoes, two hundredweight of them being turned out by it at once, and each one a mealy ball of flour. Here are the ranges, the grills, the ovens, for the "special diets" required out of these great kitchens, in extreme cases; for the thirty-six "diets" of eels (at sixpence a "diet") which the physicians judged to be required in 1882; for the seven thousand diets of other fish, at an average per diet of threepence; for the one thousand four hundred rabbits ordered, for the seven hundred and seventy-four fowls. Here is the great larder belonging to these great kitchens; the storing-place, at some moment or another, of the one thousand five hundred appetising half-dozens of oysters prescribed last year; of the thirty-nine thousand eggs used; of the nine thousand five hundred and sixty pounds of bacon; of the four thousand pounds of butter; of the forty-seven thousand five hundred and ninety-one pounds and a half of beef and mutton; of the forty-four thousand three hundred and twenty pounds (not loaves) of best baker's bread.

Here are the storing-places, besides, of such "dry goods," consumed in a year, as one thousand two hundred and ninety-nine tins of Brand's essence of beef; as one hundred and twelve pounds of arrow-root (bought at fourpence-halfpenny per pound); as two hundred and nineteen hundredweights of ice; as six hundred and

sixteen pounds of barley; as treacle, sago, rice, cornflour, and other groceries in fair proportion. Here is the cistern for milk—the cistern, observe; a great reservoir of slate, cool and clean, where four hundred pints of milk a day are kept.

Here are the linen closets, holding scores of counterpanes, scores of sheets, hundreds of towels, hundreds of pillow-cases, hundreds of covers, dusters, cloths. Here are the rooms for the patients' clothes, warmed, neat, orderly, like everything else. Here are the nurses' sleeping-rooms; the rooms slept in at night, the rooms slept in by day; the double staff wanting this double accommodation, and making it, by inversion of the royal British mode, that in some portion or another of the hospital's dominions, the sun has never risen, but it is always night.

Going on still (with some allusion, after so much, to the desirability of recourse to the carrying-chairs in which very weakly patients are moved about; to the Bath-chairs in which patients are wheeled into the sunny air of the grounds, supposing they cannot walk to it), here are the nurses' sculleries; small utility-rooms on each floor, where beef-teas, and so on, turned from for the moment, can be kept warm; where hot water can always be obtained; where there are shelves for clean porcelain sick-feeders, when patients cannot lift their heads to drink; for clean porcelain portable inhalers, when patients cannot be carried to the rooms; for curved tin body-heaters, when spine, or chest, or feet want immediate comforting. Here, too, are the patients' wards, with some of the patients in them, close in bed. There is no Christmas Cricket on the Hearth for them, poor souls; they lie here (so straight, so quelled, so neatly ordered and apart) shut out from recreation-time for this night, at least; but gladdened that the recreation is there, and hopeful, as the hope is held to them, that, by the next occasion—it will be only in a week—they will be well enough to claim the enjoyment like the rest. Here, further, on the males' side, is a patients' sitting-room, or general dining-hall; and here is a young fellow, facing the fire, in a lounging-chair, with pillows to support him, with a light book in his hand, with his fine pale face the very model for a mediæval monk, as the grey woolwrap which the hospital allows him, breaks up the straight lines of his modern clothes, and lies about his head and throat in shadowing and softening folds.

"And you?" is said, when he is come upon; "were you, too, afraid to venture? I made sure you were away."

"You see, sir," was the poor patient's poor patient reply, "it might not have put me back, but then it might, and that would be a pity. I am doing so well—oh, so very well, I didn't wish to run a risk."

Doing so well! With that low breath; with that short gasp after every word!

"It was, perhaps, wise," he is told, "the best that you could do. And you will hear from the others, when they come up, how nice it all has been. So now, remind me, when was it you came in?"

The poor fellow was proud to tell.

"It was in August, sir, on the 23rd"—or some other day—"and on the 30th I underwent the operation first. And the second was on the 29th of November, only last week. It was the cutting away little pieces of my ribs—really removing the bone. And I am anxious, sir, not to upset the good work that has been done. The week will pass. And then, you see, I may be able to get down!"

Now a glance, as there is passing of them, at these nests of books, the writers' gifts, in more cases than very quickly could be told, or the publishers' gifts, or the gifts of friends; to a glance at prints, also publishers' gifts; to a glance at the dresses of the nurses, their French caps, their tennis-aprons, their black kilted gowns, puffed a little, and somewhat trailing on the ground; and, led by such evidence of solicitude, of generosity, of the charm of diversifying graces, here, outside the dining-hall, are other items of the same tendency, by no means to be overlooked now that the hospital has been entered and the round of it is being done.

Here, to enter a quite new scene, is the chapel. The patients come to it as to a neighbouring church, warmed though it is like everywhere else; the women putting on their bonnets and other open-air dressings, the men reverting to the routine of ordinary outdoor service attendances just the same. It is a better solace to them that way; a deeper repose; a nearer approach, from habit, to that severance from home-troubles and entrance into a region of peace and calm that is so beautiful an influence of public worship, leading to such beautiful ends. Besides, to all effects, the building is a church, with all church graces. It has communion-table, lectern, pulpit, seats, font, stained glass, an organ, an

offertory-box, the pence from which—or may be the silver, if persons know of it who are the owners of silver and whose hearts are touched—go to give old clothing, travelling-money, food—some trifle—to patients who are leaving the hospital nearly destitute, and who would quickly lose all the good that they have gained were it not for the help that can be handed to them out of this "Rose Fund."

Here are all the appliances in case of fire.

Here is a ventilating-shaft, one of several that supply this soft warm air like a transplanted Madeira, and carry away all the air that has been breathed.

Here is the dispensary, giving subject matter for a volume. It might be a bar for the diffusion of costly liqueurs or choicest vintages, with its rows of china barrels, tapped—containing iron and quassia, though, ipecacuanha, quinine, squills—and its trough arrangement to catch the drips. It might still more be a bar in its regular beer-engine apparatus opposite, from which good streams are poured of distilled water, of castor oil, of senna, of steel wine. Cod-liver oil is here, in a cistern, like the milk. Six hundred gallons of it are a year's consumption. Lozenges are dealt out from here by tons; here is a deep drawer full of them, partitioned off into quarters, of different kinds, and each quarter holding sufficient, it might be thought, to serve a town; and here is a second drawer with these twisted up, sugarloaf-wise, in packets, for quicker handing away. Powders are kept, as ready, and as profuse; the colours for the papers of each sort being different, so that detection could come immediately, in case one should be misplaced. Labels are here ready cut and ready arranged; octagon-bottles are here, with a corrugated surface, to hold external drugs; just by is a drawer of plaisters, cut every shape and size; over, separate and well away, is a small, shut poison-cupboard.

Noting these, which is not noting a tithe of all, but which must suffice, and coming from them, here are the resident doctors' sleeping-rooms; snug bachelors' quarters enough, if sleep were always certain to be done in them. This by no means follows, though; for here, immediately outside, is a set of electric bells; and at the sound of any one of these the doctor's duty is to leave his bed at once to see which ward is indicated, and either to signal to know what is the urgency, or straightway, at his

quickest, to go there to see. Here is the telephone that he would use to enquire on most occasions. Here is——

The lady-superintendent! Flushed from the Cricket's chirp still pleasantly being presented in the hall; flushed, because she has heard the electric bell, because she may not, by her conscience, assume there has been no need to ring it, and in this very fact, the best exemplification in herself of the admirable organisation throughout these admirable buildings, she is promptly asking, full of resources, full of quiet power, "I know where the doctor is; did you want him?"

A little story must come as a *finis* to this sketch.

In Stamford Street, Blackfriars, there lived a rich old lady, mistress of half a row of houses there. She left them tenantless, as she had succeeded to them; dingy, rotting. Under one of these rattlesome collapsing roof-tops the rich old lady lived; and lived alone. She let the place get lined with dirt and cobwebs, she let it crack, and creak, and rust, and blister, till the air could almost sweep through it unchecked, and its windows might as well have been unglazed, and filled up with planks or bricks, for all the light that could pierce through them, or all the use made of them by the rich old lady's eyes. For all that, the rich old lady did some strange stray visiting among other rich; and she had a heart. The heart led her to keep in bitter memory the dying sufferings of a consumptive nurse to whom she had been deeply attached; the heart led her to live over again these sufferings, with even more bitterness, when a girl, who had been her companion, also died of consumption; and the little visiting she did brought her into talk, one evening, with a philanthropist who had the well-doing of the Brompton Hospital in mind, and who spoke warmly about it. An incident not weighed then, and scarcely remembered, it was the seed of a vast result. The rich old lady made herself one of the hospital's subscribers, always taking her annual cheque to Williams, Deacon, and Co., the hospital's bankers, and always writing to the hospital's secretary to say she had done so, and would thank him for a receipt; and one dark December afternoon, some seven years ago—just such a dark December afternoon as it was when the Cricket was on the Hearth at the hospital in the manner that has been seen—a lawyer waited upon the secretary there to say the

rich old lady was dead, and that all her personal property belonged at that moment to the hospital, by her special bequest. All her personal property! But how much might "all" be? Upon entering the dilapidated dwelling, there was a tambourine there; there was a scattering of decaying furniture, spindle-legged and spare and poor; there were eccentric habits to be traced, queer crotchets, eccentricities; there were stacks of discoloured pictures, face to face, back to back, flat, hung anyhow; there was a thin, timbery, weazen-wired old piano, in the drawer of which, after considerable searching, there had been the discovery of the old lady's will (this piano being now in the lady superintendent's apartments as a memento); there were, of course, two or three humble annuitants outside who had had expectations that as much as this, and more, would have been a legacy to them; and this did not look as if the Brompton Hospital would be very greatly the gainer by the clauses in its favour that the rich old lady, Miss Cordelia Angelica Read, had had put into her will.

This aspect altered though, when things were sifted. There were deeds here, deeds there; there were shares here, there were shares there; there was money, there were notes, there was stock, there was scrip, there was as much, eventually, as one hundred and ten thousand pounds; and when the title to this was made clear, and legacy-duty was paid, and small annuities were purchased for the disappointed humble friends, and when lawyers' fees and other costs were settled, the hospital was left with a bountiful balance of nearly eighty thousand pounds. Such a princely sum caused much counsel—caused much thought. Were it put out to interest, the existing hospital, with its two hundred beds, would have so much extra income that it might almost be said to have power to retire from the subscribing world, its fortune made; on the other hand, the two hundred beds the old building held, were not nearly enough for the suffering patients, from all over the kingdom, year by year, entreating to be taken in; and, electing to rely for income on the charity and generosity of those whose charity and generosity have never failed, the governors resolved, finally, to build accommodation for one hundred and thirty patients more, making it that an ever-coming one hundred and thirty extra patients, year by year, and in perpetuity, should enjoy Miss Read's bounty. Miss Read's riches are spent therefore.

That is, they are transmuted into the efficient new building that is a grander monument to her than any that could be erected on a church wall or in a cemetery; and now the governors only want the public to come forward with a small gift each annually, to let the filling of the extra beds at once begin.

Two brief circumstances, only, have to be added. When the ground and houses opposite the single building were bought as a site on which to erect the better half, a house was pulled down that had been one of the houses of Thomas Moore. And when the rich old lady's pictures (her own portrait among them, in company with her tambourine) were freed from stains and dust and could be seen, they were found to be a splendid collection of Opies, each one a treasure. In proof of which, there they are, in the board-room, and in the lecture-hall; and should there be a wish on the part of anybody to see them, an excellent plan would be to go to the hospital, with a subscription as a letter of introduction.

"WAS IT SUCCESS?"

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

IN the course of the following week Dr. Teggett received a little note from Mrs. Carden, and it gave him the impression that she had recovered a good deal of her equanimity.

"I am staying with my sister, Mrs. Gibbs," she wrote. "Will you come and dine with us on Friday? Rosa is here too, and so hopes you will come. She has quite lost her heart to you."

The doctor took this news calmly. He knew that ladies, to fill up a half-sheet or round off a period, do not scruple to compose charming messages, without the slightest authority from the supposed sender. He was not, therefore, unduly cast down when, on arriving at Mrs. Gibbs's, he could discern no particular welcome on Miss Rosa's face. She greeted him with a nervous frown, and retreated behind the shadow of a window-curtain.

Mrs. Gibbs, though older than her sister, looked almost as young. An unbroken course of worldly prosperity was seen in the beam of her clear eye and the smoothness of her skin. She was finely developed and finely dressed. She had had four daughters, and she had married them all young. Her son alone remained to irradiate by the glory of his virtues and talents the decline of her life.

Mrs. Gibbs received the doctor with great cordiality. It was many years since they had met, and there was much polite questioning on either side. She gave the latest intelligence from her married daughters with a natural complacency, and described the charming costume Kitty wore when she started for her honeymoon in the spring.

"Kitty was the last one to go," said Mrs. Gibbs with an attempt to sigh. "I have no one now but my boy Lancelot."

Mrs. Carden gave a real sigh at Caroline's luck, and threw in a depreciatory remark concerning the sons-in-law.

"Well, of course they have their faults," said Mrs. Gibbs calmly; "but they are all in excellent positions. Every one of my girls has her carriage, and I call that very good for such comparatively young establishments. I had been married fifteen years before Mr. Gibbs bought me my brougham."

"You are very silent, Miss Rosie," said the doctor, quite unconscious of the agonies he caused her by his notice. "How many carriages will you stand out for before you name the happy day?"

Never very quick, and now denser than ever from shyness, the girl began to tremble and stammer.

"What happy day?" she jerked out.

The doctor chuckled amiably.

"Why, don't you mean to cut out your cousins, and make the best marriage of them all?"

"I don't want to marry," choked Rosa hastily, as though fearing the ceremony might be performed on the spot.

Mrs. Gibbs gazed at her niece with serenity.

"You will change your mind when you are a little older, my dear—though, by-the-bye, Rosie is nearly nineteen, is she not? How have you managed, Louey, to keep her so very young? When I remember what irrepressible creatures my girls were at fifteen, I quite envy you, I assure you."

"From all accounts, your girls were accomplished young ladies before they left the nursery," said Mrs. Carden a little spitefully.

It was not pleasant, with Rosa in the room, to have Caroline vaunting her daughters.

Rosa, meanwhile, stood in a window-bay, and looked disconsolately down into the street. The doctor, trotting about the room in his restless fashion, came over to her and drew up a chair.

"What have you done to your hair?" he said, peering round her kindly. "I don't think it's dressed in the same way."

"Mamma did it," said the girl abruptly. "Don't I look ridiculous?"

"Not at all, not at all; I see it was a mistake to hide such a nice smooth forehead."

"What's the good?" muttered Rosa.

"Your mamma naturally wants you to outshine other young ladies."

"I don't see why I should outshine other people; Miss Haverson never wished me to do so."

"Well, of course your governess did not take such an interest in you as your mamma does."

"Mamma didn't take much interest in me all those years she was in India."

The doctor let this pass.

"You seem very fond of school," he said; "what do you do there? I never can understand how young ladies get through their time at school."

"Oh, there are lots of things to do," said Rosa, smiling, and the doctor saw she had a very white, even row of teeth. "There's ever so much study, though I don't do it now as I am the oldest girl there. I am generally with Miss Haverson when she is not in class. I help her to teach the little ones, and I have a class in the Sunday-school, and lately Miss Haverson has given me the store-room to take charge of, and has let me arrange the shelves quite my own way. You see the jams used to be kept on the top shelf; but now I——"

The doctor never learnt where Miss Rosie in her wisdom had put the jams.

"My little girl is becoming quite conversational with you," said Mrs. Carden, coming gracefully over to them; "how do you manage it, doctor? She never talks to her poor mother like that."

Rosa's face resumed its habitual gloom. Her eyebrows came frowning down, and her mouth closed as though it were never to open again. She tried to edge away, but her mother placed caressing hands upon her shoulders.

"It is too bad to spoil your flirtation like this, isn't it, darling?" she said, smiling into Rosa's scowling face.

The girl turned crimson.

"Don't," she said as she wrenched herself away and made a rush for the door, but before she reached it, she saw fit to return as precipitately as she went, and

sulkily sought refuge behind the ample person of her aunt.

Mrs. Gibbs was entirely engrossed in watching the entry of a very young, very fair man, who lounged across the room fixing his dull eyes on each in turn.

"This is my boy," said she, with a visible swelling of pride. "Lance, let me introduce you to Dr. Teggett."

Young Mr. Gibbs fixed his eyeglass in leisurely fashion.

"How do?" he murmured as he sank into a low chair and gazed vacantly round.

"How do, aunt?" Then after an instant's meditation: "Seen you before to-day, 'think?"

"What have you been doing all day, dear boy?" asked his mother tenderly.

"All sorts of things," said the young man.

"Where have you been, dear?"

"All over the shop," he said after some cogitation.

"I hope you went to the office. Your father will be so vexed if he never sees you there."

The young man rubbed his fingers softly over his mouth and chin, and then felt the back of his neck with great interest as if expecting to find some abnormal growth there. Then he thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and stretched his legs as far as they would go.

"Oh, blow the office," he said at length, and began to whistle under his breath. His mouth was generally pursed up in readiness for a whistle, and above his full red lips the flaxen downiness of his cheek had developed into silken meshes. His waistcoat was smart but neat—blue, sprigged with crimson, and with immense pearl buttons. His head was screwed to one side in vain efforts to escape from the highest and stiffest of shirt-collars. He wore a white flower, and his boots, at which he constantly looked with profound interest, were marvels of point and polish. Dr. Teggett was careful to note these details, as this was the first young man he had encountered since his return from India. It struck him that manners and customs had altered considerably since his own youth. Conversation too appeared to be at a discount, for, beyond a remark on the weather, which he pronounced to be "beastly damp," Mr. Lancelot confined himself to low harmonious whistlings.

His light eye roved round until it lit on Rosa, and then he seemed to pull himself together, and fixing his glass with some-

thing like vigour, he scrutinised her with great earnestness. The girl turned every shade from tawny brown to burning crimson, and seemed to wriggle under his inspection like a worm on a hook.

"That was your father's knock, Lance," said Mrs. Gibbs; "go, there's a dear boy, and ask him to come up, or he'll stay muddling over his papers till dinner-time."

"Humbug!" said her son softly; "he'll come fast enough."

Mr. Gibbs, senior, verified his son's prediction by coming in shortly after, and he seemed to fill the room with his hearty laugh, and to infuse new blood in the veins by his cordial handshake and broad homely smile. This gentleman, who now rolled in superfluous flesh and money, had, according to his own account, come up to London with the proverbial half-crown in his pocket, and had made his way, sir, by sheer pluck and hard work. He also let you know that he was the most bluff, honest, good-hearted fellow in the world; but his friends were somewhat sceptical of these statements, though all agreed in believing he had risen from small beginnings.

Mr. Gibbs wrung the doctor's hand until the tears came into his guest's eyes; swore that the oftener he saw Mrs. Carden, the more positive he was she looked younger than she did twenty years ago; begged Miss Rosie to give her poor old uncle a kiss, and gave his son a slap on the back with a "Well, sir! I suppose it's your cousin we may thank for the honour of your society—eh?"

"Confound it, you know," expostulated the young man in great wrath; "when will you learn to let a fellow alone? You come down on a man as though he were a bit of wood with that hand of yours. Suppose you think I can't feel?"

"Hey!" said Mr. Gibbs with a fat chuckle, "there's a young lady in the room who knows better than that. She don't think you can't feel, she knows your feelings are pretty keen in a certain quarter, I'll be bound. Now then, sir, don't be making eyes at your cousin. Ah, youth, youth! that's the golden time, doctor. If I were the man I was twenty years ago, I should not let Mr. Lancelot here usurp all the favour of a certain pair of black eyes."

This theory of a secret sympathy between the two young people appeared to afford Mr. Gibbs the most exquisite enjoyment. He passed his tongue repeatedly over his

lips, and was in the mood to nudge his fellow-man under the ribs. But the doctor prudently kept at arm's-length, and the two young people themselves seemed to ill-appreciate his humour. Rosa was the picture of Despair, and Mr. Lancelot might have sat for a companion study of Disgust.

"Come, sir, you may take your cousin in to dinner," said Mr. Gibbs in a tone of immense concession; but the young gentleman evaded the honour by retreating to wash his hands, and Rosa, overjoyed at her escape, found her way down alone. But in the dining-room worse troubles awaited her.

Mr. Gibbs was helping the soup when he suddenly observed his niece with her black head bowed down to the cloth, and her face buried in her hands.

His jaw fell, likewise the soup-ladle.

"Heyday!" he said blankly; "what's the matter with you?"

The girl raised a frightened, burning face.

"I was asking a blessing," she answered huskily.

"Oh, was that all?" said Mr. Gibbs with contempt, for he felt that his feelings had been played with. Mrs. Gibbs had looked on with serene amusement, and Dr. Teggett had uttered his accustomed "Lord bless me!" though in quite a different spirit to that in which Rosa used the words, while Mrs. Carden gave a miserable little sigh. It was all very well for Caroline to smile, but it was impossible for Rosa's mother to watch her idiosyncrasies with the same light heart.

Mr. Gibbs, junior, came in when the fish was on the table, and had the soup brought back for him. He drank a great deal of wine, and screwed himself round between whiles to stare at his cousin. Beyond this, he favoured the company with a judicious silence.

Mr. Gibbs, senior, on the contrary, was a mine of wit and humour, and anecdotes which widened towards the point; he was also becomingly hospitable in the good old English style. He hoped Dr. Teggett would often come and cut his mutton with him.

"Plain homely fare, you know, sir; I'm not particular. Give me, I say, just a mutton-chop and a well-boiled potato, and I don't envy the queen her kickshaws." (To the servant handing sauce: "Confound you! what do you mean by putting stuff like that on the table? It's burnt,

sir! Pitch it out of window and yourself after it.") "Come any day you like, doctor, if you are not afraid of pot-luck. The more the merrier, say I."

As dinner progressed, the host became still more cordial; redder also in the face. When the ladies had gone up, he almost begged Dr. Teggett to be as a brother to him, and made several unsuccessful attempts to thaw the frigidity of his son. But he only elicited a "Don't come any of your gammon over me, guv'nor," from the charming youth, who sprawled along the table, and made careful use of a golden toothpick.

When the doctor went up to the drawing-room he looked round for Rosa, and found her wandering gloomily about, taking up a book here and there, but too shy to read, and far too shy to join the tête-à-tête near the coffee-table. Looking at her dispassionately, the old man considered her an ugly ungainly girl, with a lowering expression, coarse hair, and a hot colouring; but he dimly felt that she was miserable, shy to positive actual suffering, and quite unable to understand or appreciate the new circle in which she found herself. He did not so much pity her as feel interested in her; she was so unique. It was with a view to studying this uniqueness that he entered into conversation with her, and it was with a sincere desire to give her pleasure that he welcomed an idea which occurred to him, while turning over by her side the pages of an illustrated journal. They were looking at a drawing of a popular actress, and it appeared to him that Rosa was just the sort of girl to enjoy a play. He lost no time in asking her to go and persuade her mamma to allow him to take her some evening. A lull had fallen on the room, and his offer was distinctly heard. Rosa showed no sign of pleasure, but mutely stood before him with the crimson deepening in her cheeks.

"Well, Rosa," said her mother petulantly, 'will you not thank Dr. Teggett for his kind offer?'

"Perhaps Miss Rosa does not care for the play?" he remarked, in smiling expectation of a prompt disclaimer.

But the girl, wringing her hands together, uttered no sound, but seemed ready to sink through the floor. Young Mr. Gibbs fixed his glass, and almost petrified the victim by his vacant stare. Mrs. Carden turned on her daughter with exasperation.

"Gracious Heavens, Rosa! why can't you speak? Do you want to go, or do you not?"

"I don't want to go," came the muttered reply.

The doctor was surprised, but kindly.

"Quite right, my dear, quite right!" he said; "if you don't care to go, there is an end of it."

But to Mrs. Carden there was not an end; she insisted on knowing what Rosa meant by it, and kept repeating, "Why? why?" until she was on the brink of tears.

"Perhaps Rosa thinks it sinful?" suggested Mrs. Gibbs in her serenest manner.

"Sinful!" repeated Mrs. Carden in tones of anguish. "Rosa, how dare you! Tell me instantly what you mean!"

Then Rosa, harassed, burning, and choked with sobs, was heard to answer huskily:

"Miss Haverson never went to a theatre, she thought it wrong, and so do I. I should not like the Lord to come for me and find me in a playhouse."

The most complete stupefaction fell upon her hearers. Mrs. Carden, with one swift deprecating look at each in turn, burst into tears. Mr. Gibbs became suddenly engrossed in the pattern of his hearth-rug, and his son expressed his feelings by a long unchecked whistle. Only Mrs. Gibbs, who having foreseen the climax, was equal to it, gave a dexterous turn to the conversation with a "By-the-bye, Louey," and talked smoothly on until her sister dried her pretty eyes and was sufficiently composed to answer with coherency.

When calmness was restored it was observed that Miss Rosa had escaped from the room; but not until Mr. Lancelot, too, had slipped away, and Mr. Gibbs had fallen into noisy slumbers, was any reference made to the distressing episode.

Then Mrs. Carden referred to her "unhappy girl."

"What am I to do?" she asked ruthfully; "the girl is ruined! If she were to speak anywhere else as she has done to-night, I believe it would kill me."

"Ha! to be sure!" said the doctor, rather communing with himself than assenting to the likelihood of Mrs. Carden's probable demise; "you must point out to Miss Rosa that while it is very right and proper for a young lady to be religious, there are times and places—yes, to be sure, times and places."

"I wish I had never come back from India," said Mrs. Carden with symptoms of returning tears; "I know I can never be happy again! It is awfully hard; I do not know what I have done to deserve this."

"Don't be absurd," said her sister; "something may be done with Rosa yet. Remember you have only had her for two days, and you have to struggle against the influence of eighteen years."

"No one could credit Miss Rosa to be eighteen; for all she is so tall, she looks more like a girl of fourteen."

"Eighteen!" sighed Mrs. Carden; "oh, Carrie, how different I was at eighteen! Do you remember?"

"My dear, you were always a sweet little thing," declared Carrie, "and Rosa will never be that; but I believe I see the makings of a fine woman in her—yes, really! I don't say she will ever be handsome, but she might become striking-looking. A woman's business is attraction, and what does it matter whether she attracts by the regularity or the irregularity of her face? Rosa is tall to start with, and that gives her an advantage—one can't overlook her. As yet she has no figure, but it will be her dressmaker's business to provide one. She has plenty of hair, and when she learns to manage it properly, it ought to look very effective; and her colour is brilliant, though at present too prone to spreading where not required. But above all things," said Mrs. Gibbs emphatically, "you must not let her be serious. She has a pronounced face and she should have pronounced manners to suit; let her be impudent, frivolous, fast, anything you like but earnest. Teach her to be vain, and you have won half the battle. I should advise a prolonged course of novel-reading and pretty gowns, and take her to Paris until the transformation is complete. And if at the end of two years you have not effected a radical change, why then you may think of sackcloth and ashes, and a retreat into obscurity."

Mrs. Gibbs's invigorating worldliness infused new hope into her sister, who was only too glad to be justified in looking on the bright side of life. She had been a successful little woman, and she was quite certain she had always deserved success. Her small head began to fill with "ideas" as to the best means of "transforming" poor Rosa, and when the doctor bade her good-bye, all traces of tears had vanished

from her admirable eyes, and her habitual expression of self-esteem had returned, without which expression no woman can be truly charming.

THE PALACE OF PARCHMENTS.

THERE are still left some pleasant and home-like nooks of eighteenth century London in the quarter, now almost devoted exclusively to printers, between Shoe Lane and Fetter Lane, with comfortable unpretending red-brick houses; here and there a florid doorway; sometimes a glimpse through some narrow gateway of busy Fleet Street—not always busy, indeed, for there are often strange pauses in the stream of traffic and at such a moment a sense of the quietude and tranquillity of other days steals over us, and we may fancy that Johnson is darkening the passage, or that Goldsmith is coming round the corner in his celebrated peach-coloured coat. But there is one little glimpse, a charming little bit that neither Johnson nor Goldsmith could have seen to perfection, for it is made up of old and new. Just where a little brick church is squeezed up at a street-corner a narrow passage opens into Fetter Lane, with a porte-cochère, if such it can be called, seeing that there is no gate, and that the passage is devoted to foot-passengers; but the gateway, such as it is, is formed by an old-fashioned house that spans the passage, with windows looking down it, and over the roof of this house rise the towers and pinnacles of some Gothic building, and what with the deep shadow of the passage and the light on the roadway beyond seen through the archway, and the soft tones of the old house, and the grand mass of the building beyond, there is a quaintness and charm about the whole picture that suggest a glimpse into the cathedral-close of some ancient city.

The charm is soon spent; a step or two farther, and commonplace resumes its sway. But the Gothic building still remains standing fair and square before us. A very satisfactory building on the whole—satisfactory in its strength and solidity—strong towers, massive portals, giving a feeling of security and staunchness, while, though hardly ecclesiastical in aspect, it is yet scarcely unmistakably civil. It is the Record Office, as everybody knows; and yet the title is a misnomer, for this massive building—a building of yesterday, and

yet in itself a monument of antiquity—is rather a storehouse of the national muniments than an office properly so called, as nearly all the office work connected with it is done in adjacent buildings.

Thus, at least, we are informed by a civil and intelligent policeman, who explains the plan of the various buildings likely to prove a maze to the uninitiated. Only, indeed, under the direction of a guardian of the law should we feel justified in walking boldly through a private house, where we expect to be brought up presently by the pump and the waterbutt, while an angry housekeeper demands the cause of our intrusion. Nothing of the kind happens, however; it is the unexpected that always happens, and in this case the unexpected is a quiet courtyard, surrounded by quiet and solemn-looking buildings where there is some kind of quiet legal stir. If we had come upon the place in a legitimate way through its regular entrance in Chancery Lane, there would have been no doubt or speculation about the matter. It is just Rolls Yard, and here close at hand is Rolls Chapel, with a front of plaster thickly peppered with flint stones, after the fashion of the country churches about the chalk downs—a snug, quiet little chapel that one can fancy served on Sundays by some venerable Elizabethan divine with a snowy solemn beard and the flat biretta of the period, a divine who reads from the Prayer-book of Edward the Sixth and serves up a homily in the manner of the ancient fathers, while from their marble tombs ancient Masters of the Rolls raise themselves to listen with grave and decorous appreciation.

All of this is very wide of the mark, no doubt; but this chapel interests us as a curious relic of old times, and as having once been itself the repository of the Chancery records—not merely the dry legal records, but treaties, conventions, charters, everything, indeed, that passed the Great Seal.

We are told that before Edward the Third gave the chapel to the lawyers it had been appropriated to the converted Jews—no great handful even in those days, when a little bit of torture or a suggestion of the gallows or the stake were deemed legitimate means of softening the unconverted heart. And not so long ago, still with a curious mixture of the sacred and secular, it was customary to order mortgage money to be paid in the Chapel of the Rolls, and one of the Master's clerks was

ing an appearance to receive the money, while on the very rare occasion of the unfortunate mortgagor by some wonderful turn of fortune being able to make an appearance to pay, the same clerk was entitled to half-a-guinea.

Beyond the chapel is the Rolls House, a homely comfortable-looking building, which is in a way the head-quarters of the Record Office, although till lately used also as a court-house, where no doubt the Master of the Rolls presided, quite at home in his own house, and dusty barristers droned away the hours. Here, at all events, is the office of the deputy-keeper; the head-keeper, ex officio, being the Master of the Rolls for the time being. One would think from the title of the office that this must have been so from the beginning. But the inference is not quite correct, and curiosity once awakened on the subject, perhaps it will be well to allay it before proceeding to our interview with the gentlemen of the records.

In the days of those forefathers of ours whom we are no longer allowed to call Saxons, rolls were not, nor the masters thereof. Deeds and charters no doubt existed—many of them still survive—but all intended to lie flat and open in the form of a book. And no doubt from the existence of book-land as well as folk-land in the then existing polity there was some kind of land registry, the traces of which have been lost. But the general spirit of procedure was public recognition. A man's title was the approval of the folk-mote before which he brought his claim. And in the same informal way the original acts of councils and synods were single instruments, written usually on both sides of a leaf of vellum and witnessed by the king, who presided, and the great men there present, without any registry or record being made in any roll or book.

But when the Duke of Normandy appeared on the scene as ruler all this was changed. With him came scribes and legists with admirable method and order, but all revolving about and dependent on the king. And thus our records in the beginning are just the accounts and memoranda of the king in the form of rolls, a form borrowed no doubt from the French and through them indirectly from the practice of the Roman Empire. And where the king went there was the seat of law and justice, and the first and rudimentary trace of a court distinct from the

person of the king is that of the Exchequer, for that was the vital kernel of the king's house, like that of any common man.

And the Exchequer was so called probably from the cloth painted in chequers like a chess-board, to assist the receivers of the king's dues in their calculations. In Normandy, whence we get the institution, the exchequer developed into the chief executive and legislative body in the duchy, and continued as such, under the name of Parliament, till days comparatively recent. And among the most ancient records, by the way, in that huge building, are still the original rolls of the Norman Exchequer brought away by King John, when he contrived to lose his hereditary possessions in France. But in England the greater wealth, population, and stir of life brought about greater complexity of institutions, while the free spirit of the nation could not long tolerate the concentration of all authority about the king's person. Under Magna Charta it was obtained from the king that the Common Pleas should be separate from the royal jurisdiction and should remain stationary at Westminster. And King Henry the Third, confirming the charter obtained from John, ordained that there should be three judgment seats in the great hall at Westminster: the Common Pleas at the entry of the hall on the right hand, the King's Bench at the upper end of the hall on the same side, the Chancery on the left or south-west corner. The separation of the Chancery from the Exchequer, said to have been effected in the reign of Richard the First, led to further complications, and eventually to the classification of the rolls of record. The Chancery is originally the secretarial branch of the king's household, and the chancellor owes his ever-growing importance to being the custodian of the king's seal, which must be affixed to every important document. And the rolls which record the acts of the king are classified as patent rolls, where the missives or acts are open, and addressed to his subjects in general, and close rolls where the king's letters are fastened by a seal and addressed to individuals. Then there are charter rolls, which it is said originated in the following curious manner.

When Richard the Lion-hearted, who was also lion-fisted in the grip he laid upon all he could fasten upon—when Richard sailed for the Holy Land, the Great Seal went with him as a matter of course, and its keeper, the vice-chancellor, one Master

Roger Maluscatullus—a dog Latin equivalent for Malchien. Well, this unfortunate Roger was drowned in a storm off the Isle of Cyprus, and the Great Seal went to the bottom of the sea, and there probably remains to this day. But this loss proved a gain to the king's exchequer. For a new seal having been made it was held necessary by the Chancery that all charters hitherto sealed were now invalid, and all the world had to pay smartly for having its charters freshly sealed. But the world that held charters, being an influential kind of world, largely composed of earls, bishops, barons, abbots, and such like, felt that a reform in procedure was necessary, and obtained that a record should be kept of their charters.

In addition to the rolls already mentioned are the Liberate Rolls, which represent the king's cheque-book in fact, for the liberation to be effected is of coin from the royal treasury. A real solid treasury of oak and iron, a chest with three different locks, as you may still see sometimes in old alms-boxes in churches. So that the opening of the treasury was an affair of some complication, and when closed it was further secured by a strong leather strap, upon which the treasurer affixed his seal. These liberate rolls not being mere dry collections of figures and names, contain many curious and interesting items. Thus "The King"—Henry the Third—"to the Sheriff of London greeting. We command you that you do cause the keeper of our white bear, which was lately sent to us from Norway, and is now in our Tower of London, to have one muzzle and one iron chain to hold the bear when out of water, and one long and strong cord to hold the same bear when he is fishing in the river Thames." And next time you pass the Tower Stairs imagine the river flowing clear over a silver strand, with the peaked sail of a galley here and there, and our friend the white bear sitting half-way in the water watching for the salmon that are running up to spawn on the gravel beds of Kingston or Marlow.

From the mandate to the sheriff it will be seen that in those times his duties were more varied than the present. In fact he was the chief fiscal authority for his county, and his accounts were annually rendered on parchment rolls, called Pipe Rolls, on which all the king's dues were scored up against the sheriff; who against these marked all the payments he had made on the king's account. These pipe

rolls being each for a separate county, are very dear to local historians, and are often found printed in county histories.

With all these rolls must be counted the rolls of the various courts of law, in the shape each of them of an enormous Cheshire cheese, the records of fines, of inquisitions post mortem, to ascertain, not how a man came by his death, but what he left in the way of property, with, later on, inventories and calendars and other miscellaneous parchments. And all these hitherto mentioned in numbers and completeness quite astonishing, considering the ages that have elapsed, and the civil wars, rebellion, fires, floods, and, worst foe of all, the carelessness of custodians.

Not that the national records have been altogether neglected. Every now and then a business-like, clerkly king would busy himself about the matter. Elizabeth looked up the records. But the first attempt to make the records available for historians and men of letters was in the reigns of William and Mary, and Anne, when Thomas Rymer, Historiographer Royal, under royal patronage, compiled and printed his *Foedera*, consisting of the "Leagues and conventions, letters, and all other public acts between the Kings of England and all other emperors, kings, popes, princes, and communities, beginning with the reign of King Henry the First, and ending with that of King Charles the First." The original commission to Rymer, signed by Queen Mary—the amiable, not the sanguinary queen—empowered him to make his searches into the records "in our Tower of London, in the rolls, in the augmentation office and exchequer, and in any other places where records are kept." And the "any other" included a variety of very curious receptacles for such documents.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, while still Rymer was at work, the House of Lords began to look up the records and appointed a committee, which sat for some years before it died out. But with the eighteenth century commenced the movement that eventually has landed us here in the Rolls Yard, with the massive structure of the record house in perspective. In 1800 began the Record Commission, appointed at the request of Parliament; Lord Grenville, Pitt, and Addington being conspicuous members. And this commission went on, printing a certain number of valuable text-books and generally showing the usual aptitudes of commissions for doing the smallest amount

of work, with the greatest quantity of friction. The commission ended in 1837, having done nothing whatever to ensure the proper custody of the records.

At that date there were three record-offices properly so called: the Tower, where the records were kept partly in the Wakefield Tower and partly in what Prynne describes as "a dark corner of Cæsar's Chapel;" the Rolls Chapel; and the Chapter House at Westminster.

But besides these regular offices there were the holes and corners where deeds had been stored. In 1833 Sir Robert Inglis and Henry Hallam visited the various repositories, and some were found in a terrible state of decay and confusion.

At the building known as the King's Mews, for instance, in Carlton Ride—where records were lying in a great heap—putrefaction had set in among the sheepskins, and when the great heap was finally cleared out, it was found that rats had made their home there for generations, their skeletons and bones were found distributed through the mass; and during the first removal of the records a dog was employed to kill the rats that were thus disturbed, just as in a barn when the corn is cleared out.

When the Record Commission expired, the present Record Department was inaugurated by Act of Parliament, with the Master of the Rolls, who had taken an active part in the commission, at the head of affairs. In the struggle for existence between the various offices, the Chapter House of Westminster seems to have had the advantage. The keeper of the records there—the late Sir Francis Palgrave—was appointed deputy-keeper under the new system, but Sir Thomas Hardy, his successor, was from the old office in the Tower.

A most adventurous hunt after ancient records under the new system was undertaken by one of the new staff, who made a voyage of discovery into the wilds of Wales in search of the records of the then recently-abolished Special Welsh Circuits. In Carnarvon the records had been left in a cellar overflowed with water from the river, and finally had been sold by the hundredweight as waste, and had even been carted into Menai Straits. There is another rather gruesome story of old records left behind in a vault in Wrexham Church, and routed out by an adventurous lawyer in search of precedent, reminding one of Deloraine's visit to the tomb of

Michel Scot, but in this case the lawyer made his escape in a gig with a lot of the parchments packed in hampers.

And, indeed, without going so far afield as Wales, there is a fine old crusted flavour about many of the investigations into the little record offices about the Inns of Court, with their guardians in the way of secondaries and sworn and side clerks, bag-keepers and court-keepers, who all had some little interest in the way of fees or honorariums in the musty parchments under their charge. No doubt all the sinecurists got handsome compensation for the loss of all their little profits, and it is equally likely that if there were a poor fellow gaining a little hardly-earned money in making copies and translations out of hours, that poor fellow was sent empty away.

About this time it will be remembered that the Houses of Parliament were in full swing of construction, and Mr. Barry, as he was then, the architect, had a scheme in his head for packing away all the public records in his Victoria Tower. But this was found impracticable, and then the idea occurred to the authorities of the day: Having all this lumber to stow away, can't we make a national lumber-room among the slates and rafters of the new Houses of Parliament? The record-men had a stout fight to make against this unenviable fate; but what turned the scale was the fear of all going up in one vast holocaust of a blaze, legislature and records—a clear sweep of past and present quite fearful to contemplate. And after that, the then Master of the Rolls, Lord Langdale, making a gallant stand about the matter, a reluctant consent was won from the holders of the national purse-strings to begin the new building—the palace of antiquity—on what is called the Rolls estate. Hence the lofty towers that soar over the adjoining roofs.

But how to get within these towers; to have a look at these muniments so carefully guarded; to inspect these charters; to scan with critical eye the venerable majesty of Domesday; and this without being royal historiographers, and with no royal warrant bidding the keepers stand and deliver their treasures? But the courteous deputy-keeper from his office in Rolls House comes to our assistance. First of all, there is absolute freedom for any person who has a legitimate object in view to visit the search-room, and can specify the MS. he wishes to inspect; while the shelves of the room

are loaded with catalogues, indexes, and calendars of all kinds. Well, on his making out a ticket, with a reference from the catalogue, the MS. is at once brought down to him. There are certain MSS. too precious to be inspected without special precautions, and among these is Domesday. But as for Domesday, are there not reproductions of the whole in photo-zincography, accessible at the public libraries? and for a description of Domesday, what could be a better one than that in the official catalogue of Record publications? Yes, all that may be admitted, but still, to see the book in its reality—the very handwriting of the scribes of the eleventh century—and then, with the benevolent air of one who humours a spoilt child, the deputy-keeper puts on coat and hat, and leads the way to the penetralia of the palace of antiquity, through the private house that seems to bar the exit from the yard, and under the handsome round-headed portals of the palace itself.

It is a palace with long quiet corridors, where a solitary footstep sounds hollowly on the iron gratings, with iron doors, opening, when they do open, into silent chambers, the repositories of all that is left to us to know of the days of old. A solemn feeling comes over us.

And then we pass suddenly into a comfortable circular room, lofty, almost like a cage on a large scale, and lighted from the top by skylights. There are desks all round the circle, and in the centre a large table, almost covered with papers and parchments. The assistant in charge of the room sits at a desk at the outside of the circle. The place reminds one of a chapter-house, with the hushed atmosphere and the half-legal, half-ecclesiastical flavour of the ancient tomes and parchments, while the long thoughtful visages about us seem to have borrowed a tincture from the materials they are at work upon. A glow of brightness from the sky overhead brings out the faces of the searchers, the yellow gleam of parchment and vellum, with touches of gilding here and there. Some ecclesiastic in violet robes, or the frock and cowl of a monk, would be a fitting accessory to the scene, and the motes of dust that dance in the passing sunbeam had, perhaps, when last disturbed, been shaken from the sleeve of Henry Beaucherc, or brushed from the cloak of Thomas-à-Becket.

And then to follow our guide into an inner chamber, still lined with shelves, all

loaded with books and parchments, while upon a table by itself, each volume covered with a glass case, stands the venerable Domesday Book. The two volumes are handsomely bound, with polished clasps and mountings, but the binding is quite modern, and the older binding it replaced was not earlier than the Stuart period. But the book itself is perfect and in excellent condition, the writing in double columns on each side of the page—a most beautiful specimen of the art of penmanship, the red and black of the ink scarcely faded during these eight centuries. The volumes are of different sizes, the first, containing the mass of the kingdom, being of folio size, and the other, devoted to East Anglia, of smaller or quarto form. The great earldom of Northumberland, comprising Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Durham, does not appear at all in the survey, probably because it brought no revenue to the king. London, Winchester, Abingdon, and other towns are not included, probably on account of charters of immunity previously granted. So that the book does not contain a full census of the England of the Conqueror's days, but, as far as it goes, is a wonderfully accurate and complete record of the state of the country from A.D. 1084 to 1086. Too accurate and complete, indeed, for the taxpayers of the period; witness the complaint of a contemporary writer in the Saxon Chronicle: "So very narrowly he—William—caused it to be traced out that there was not a single hide nor one virgate of land, nor even, it is shame to tell, though it seemed to him no shame to do, an ox, nor a cow, nor a swine was left that was not set down."

Taking a respectful farewell of Domesday we pass once more into the quiet echoing corridors, where the documents of English history repose like prisoners in their cells. The door of one is thrown open and the interior revealed—a vaulted chamber with a stone floor, filled with iron presses, the shelves of slate. Half-way between roof and floor an iron gallery, reached by an iron ladder to give access to the upper ranges of shelves, with just room to pass between the presses. Of these cells there are about a hundred in the building, each of which, one would say, were sufficient to contain the records of a generation. But this is an age when papers accumulate with terrible rapidity. State papers, and the correspondence of the great departments of State, are no

doubt worthy of preservation, and may prove useful to the historians of the future, but there can be little use in preserving ordinary business records. But in everybody's private experience, while there are certain papers that must be kept and others that must be destroyed, there is a middle class, provokingly numerous, scarcely worth keeping, and yet that it might be inconvenient utterly to do away with. And upon this latter class of documents it might be convenient to hold periodical inquests, such as that which sat upon Don Quixote's library, with a strong bias towards the fire that is burning in the back yard.

With respect to legal documents, records of the courts, and so on, the rule is that they shall be brought to the record house after twenty years have elapsed from their date. But these law records—of which the ancient ones are so useful to the local historian and genealogist of the period—are now (the modern ones) of no real value to anybody. The rolls, once kept with such scrupulous care, are now only entered up pro-formâ, and the real working records of the courts are now in the shorthand writers' printed reports.

It may be noted that nearly the whole of these great buildings are devoted to the storage of records and papers. The staff who are employed in the department have found convenient offices just opposite in a modern classic building once known as the Judges' Chambers. And here are carried on the various operations which are still going on in sorting, classifying, and arranging the vast bulk of documents here collected—such work as is briefly summarised in the last report of the deputy-keeper. "Two thousand seven hundred and ninety-five volumes and bundles have been arranged; twenty-eight bundles, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-four rolls, two hundred and seventy files, and fourteen thousand six hundred and sixty-two membranes and leaves have been flattened, guarded, repaired, sewed, sized, numbered, stamped, collated, tied up, ticketed, dusted, incorporated, bound." But the most useful work of the department is perhaps the transcribing and printing the raw materials for historians and students to work upon—the calendars of State papers, which from the reign of Henry the Eighth are so copious, and which illustrate and settle so many doubtful points in the history of the times to which they relate. At the same time, by degrees,

are being printed, chiefly in the annual reports of the department, summaries of the more ancient and technical records. Running the eye down the various papers that have been abstracted and indexed, one is struck with "Agin-court Muster Rolls," "Castle guard rents from various manors towards defence of Dover Castle," "Particulars for the sale of estates of Charles the First," "Royal Letters, Richard the First to Edward the First," "Subsidy Rolls, Henry the Third to William and Mary," and matchless among the archives probably of any other State, "Household and Wardrobe Accounts, John to George the Third."

In addition to those at work upon records at home, the department has an agent engaged in searching the archives of Venice and Northern Italy; a Spanish savant has long been at work among the papers at Simancas and Madrid; while among the libraries and secret archives of Rome, and in the archives of the French Republic, the emissaries of the office are delving and diving.

With all this accumulation of raw material the historian of the future is rather to be pitied than envied. He must begin upon his materials in early youth, spend his middle age in digesting them, and will be happy if in old age he retains sufficient vigour to endow his manuscript with that sparkling vitality which alone is likely to make it find favour with the publishers.

With these reflections the iron door clangs behind us, and we find ourselves in the corridor once more, by the civil policeman and close to rows of fire-buckets and glittering brass nozzles of fire-hose. And these suggest the question, How about fire? With all our eggs in one basket, all our precious records, so to speak, in one big building, what an awakening for Britannia some morning to find her priceless muniments in ashes! But then, as far as a building can be fire-proof, short of shutting out light and air altogether, this building is fire-proof. And then it is patrolled by night and day, so that altogether it is hardly likely that any fire should arise in the building itself. Perhaps it is hardly so well isolated as it might be, and a conflagration in Rolls Yard might imperil the stately building that overlooks it.

However, that is no affair of ours after all. And presently we have passed under the Gothic portals again, and are once more

in bustling Fleet Street in full presence of the nineteenth century, with the roar of traffic in our ears, and the hurrying press of living men and women all about us.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II. CHAPTER VIII. DAVEY'S TASK.

WE need to mark the rooms and their details well, for in them are some of the strangest scenes in our drama to be enacted, and it is always a good thing to grasp the idea of your scenery before the play begins. They were two, leading the one through the other, the inner chamber three shallow steps lower than that through which it entered. They were called "the squire's rooms," and were held sacred to him, so that none ever ventured to set foot in them unsummoned, save Nurse Prettyman (now a white-haired woman of sixty) and David Robin, the squire's confidential secretary. The library—thus was the first room named—led off a passage from the large entrance-hall at Dale End, and was shut off from the rest of the house by double doors. It had been a favourite room with poor old Sir Roland, and could its walls have been dowered with speech, they might have told many a sorry tale of hot disputes between father and son, and of tearful Alicia stealing down from her own chamber after the ne'er-do-well son and brother had departed, to try and comfort the old father.

On either side the wide low fireplace, with its brass dogs and tiled hearth, bookshelves ran from floor to ceiling. A mulioned window, so deeply set in the venerable masonry that the outside sill might have formed a comfortable couch for a wayfarer, occupied the centre of one side of the room. It was framed in ivy, whose stems were in places as thick as a man's wrist, having grown great with the passing of time.

Here birds loved to build, and Geoffrey Stirling was very jealous over these winged friends of his, resenting the slightest interference with their domestic arrangements. This fact they were not slow to discover, one bright-eyed thrush hatching her young brood within a hand's breadth of the window frame, and bringing them all out upon the broad sill at last, with the evident intention of giving the master of the place an opportunity of

admiring them. Even Gaylad understood that the birds must not be barked at or interfered with, and would let an impudent blackbird go worm-hunting almost under his nose, scarcely heeding it so much as to give one swish of his feathered tail. When Stirling's bank was done away with, Gaylad had been relegated to the White House, his badly fulfilled duties as watch-dog being at an end; but that was in the days of his youth. Now age had told upon him, and so long as he could lie basking in the sun or on the rug before the fire, and be quite sure his master was not far off, Gaylad had no higher ambitions.

It will be remembered that Sir Roland Ashby, in the heat of his righteous anger, had expressed a wish to have Gaylad shot, as a sentry who had slept on duty. But Geoffrey Stirling's attachment to the dog resulted in a more lenient view of his shortcomings, and as Davey loved what his master loved, and Nurse Prettyman would have looked upon it as a direct flying in the face of Providence to differ from the squire in any one point of preference or otherwise, Gaylad had a comfortable berth of it nowadays.

In a small recess at the end of the Dale End library was a window opening to the ground. From this, stone steps ran down to the garden, and here, stretched in the sun, was the place to find Gaylad in summer, while in winter he might be looked for on the shaggy rug before the fire.

At night the dog slept inside the door of Davey's room, a chamber situated high in what was called the old tower, which commanded a view of exceeding beauty, and was of a size to serve the secretary as both bedroom and writing-room. This habit on the part of Gaylad was supposed to be a lingering recollection of his duties at the bank, for he always marched up the stairs with the air of a martyr, and sank to repose with a sigh of resignation, turning his eyes up to Davey with a look that seemed to say: "Being a dog of a well-regulated mind I do my duty—but I don't like it."

The library was a place to be at rest in—a place that looked as though it might be consecrated to quiet and happy thoughts; somewhat sombre as to light, since it stood within the shadow of a mighty yew, whose lowermost branches swept the velvet sward, yet at the time of blossoming allowed one glimpses of that mighty dome

of pyramidical flowers, the rhododendron by the lake.

The walls were panelled in dark wood, and over the mantelshelf was a tall narrow mirror let into the panelling, with two lesser mirrors, one on either side, the whole effect being somewhat that of a chancel window with three lights.

Crimson was the prevailing tint of the room; soft-hued, subdued by delicate cream-coloured draperies. Heavy rugs made of skins of beasts lay here and there upon the polished floor, and the squire's great desk, with nests of drawers on either hand, stood just beneath the mulioned window.

There were not many pictures in the room, but those there were, were priceless gems.

A Magdalene at the foot of the Cross full of passionate penitence; a girl's head, by Greuze, ripe and luscious as a sun-warmed peach; some indications of a slouched hat and dingy plume overhanging a pair of living eyes that no hand save Rembrandt's could have made at once so sombre and so bright; and a very ancient painting called *The Dying Miser*—a strange picture, and one that, catching the fancy, held it.

The moribund lay extended on his tossed and tumbled couch in the last agonies of death, yet fully conscious. His face, skull-like in its emaciation, was turned with fiendish vindictive look upon a figure seen in the background, a swarthy and beautiful woman, whose lithe and supple hands toyed with and bathed in a shower of golden pieces, while a mocking smile parted her red lips, showing the gleam of pearls within. Her evil eyes defied the dying tyrant, now delivered into her hands. In vain one skinny hand clutched the air—in vain the wasted mouth mowed and gibed; she had stolen the key of the coffer, she toyed with the hoarded treasure.

Underneath this picture was written:

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

Many thought both the picture and the spirit it breathed incongruous in that pleasantest of rooms; but as Geoffrey Stirling was master, and chose to have it there, there it hung over against the window, so that the light fell upon it, while on a sunny day the shadows of the ivy-leaves flickered around and about it.

So much for the outer room; the inner one—which, it will be remembered, entered

down three shallow steps—was a simply-furnished sleeping-room—a room that might almost have suited the late Sir Charles Napier's ideas of soldierly simplicity and absence of luxury. We must, however, except a brass-bound sarcophagus-like coffer, old and valuable no doubt in the eyes of cognoscenti, that stood between the two high windows. It might have stepped out of that weird picture, *The Dying Miser*.

Not even David, the confidential secretary, had ever seen that coffer open. As to the domestic household at Dale End, those who knew of it spoke of it as containing "untold treasure," though of what nature no man ventured to surmise.

When Mrs. Geoffrey's increased ill-health rendered it necessary that Nurse Prettyman should be at hand night and day to attend upon her, the squire had given up the room in the upper corridor, next his wife's, and settled down in this, anchorite fashion, giving little or no trouble to anyone so long as his will was not crossed, and living more and more in the world of his own thoughts and the management of his vast wealth—for, though in the early days of his prosperity people had exaggerated Geoffrey Stirling's riches, multiplying his possessions so as to make a welcome wonder of them, it would have been hard to have rated them too highly nowadays.

Like a river that has overflowed its banks, the Dale End estate had passed its old limits by many a broad acre, and had Sir Roland risen from his grave to visit his old home, its present boundaries would have made him open his ghostly eyes.

Truly Ralph was heir to a rich and rare inheritance, while to this bright prospect his father had added the dower of rich and rare culture of mind; of marvellous experience of life and travel for one so young; of golden opportunities such as fell to the lot of few in those days.

"Show me his equal—show me another like him," Davey had heard his master say, talking to himself, as his manner was, and defying the world to match that boy of his, with a certain outward fling of the hand that was with him an habitual gesture, lacking neither piquancy nor grace.

Taking a leaf out of his own book, one might have said: "Where shall the world show a man equally fortunate with Geoffrey Stirling? How many parents sow in tears, to reap no sheaf of joy! How many fling pearls before swine—opportunities

before those who pass them by with idle indifference! But with this man all prospers—land to land, riches to riches, he adds as the years revolve; and the child of his love is the child of his joy and his pride!"

Yet, could some stealthy watcher have peered through the casement of the Dale End library, would that watcher have felt that Geoffrey Stirling lived and looked like a happy man? Is restlessness a sign of content? Are strange mutterings, quick changes, and transitions of manner, the marks of a spirit at peace with itself, with Heaven, and the world?

Or are such things the signs of a troubled mind that fain would find some cup of Lethe for trembling craving lips to drain to the dregs, and then—ah, blissful fancy!—fall into the deep sweet sleep of forgetfulness?

A life in which there is some milestone upon which the traveller dare not glance back, but in which he must, in self-defence, keep the eyes of his mind ever looking straight ahead, is a thing terrible indeed. To look back is to be unnerved. It is possible, or seems possible, that the consciousness of crime may urge to greatness; but only by striving to make the future an expiation for the past. To look back and dwell upon wrong done, is to fall helpless into a slough of despair.

There lay something in Geoffrey Stirling's past life upon which he did not care to look back; some dead thing over whose white face he had drawn the shroud of resolve, and yet whose form haunted his waking thoughts and nightly dreams. Was it the memory of hopes that had never known reality, of a love that had "hoped all things, believed all things," and found both hope and trust but the phantoms of a fond imagination, that had so clouded his life? Was it the spirit of regret, and the intuitive knowledge of things that "might have been" and were not, that had made him the restless, inconsistent, winning, variable man he was?

How often did Cuthbert Deane and his wife Alicia ask themselves and each other these questions? How often did faithful loving Davey marvel within himself what was the burden that weighed upon his master's heart?

But the man lived on, living his life alone; stood by his dead wife; kissed her waxen fingers ere the coffin-lid hid their delicate beauty for ever; followed

her to the grave; returned to his lonely home, was gentle, grateful—touchingly so, indeed—to Alicia and her husband for all their sympathy. “And yet, through it all,” as Alicia said, not without some passion, “one never felt to get really near him once, Cuthbert!”

Dale End seemed strangely silent after Lucy died.

She had been one who liked a fuss, who aimed at being made much of, so that even her petted ailments and the friends who came to hear about them “kept the place alive,” as the black-suited servants said. Then the story of the ghost had become public property, and added to the general sense of discomfort.

No one cared to go near the lake after nightfall; and when one morning Jeremy Bindwhistle vowed he had overnight seen the ghost in the waggoner’s frock for the third time (followed, too, by a hooded woman moaning and wringing her hands—an added horror), several of the servants thought they would give warning at “the month’s end.”

But Squire Stirling was a generous open-handed master; and, after all, there was something exciting in living in a haunted house; something that made you “thought on,” as Jeremy put it, when you paid a visit to the town.

Besides, it was a gruesome pleasure to feel that when you went out to walk of an evening, you “never knew what you might meet;” hence, in the long run no one gave notice, and now that the original ghost was supplemented by a “hooded woman,” the matter became doubly interesting.

“Where wast thou, Jeremy, when thou see’d ’em?” said Amos Callender, the more interested in the thing since he had been away “down south” when it was first mooted.

“Houldin’ on to a tree,” said Jeremy; “t’ ground fair moved wi’ me I wur that feert.”

“Art’er sure there were two on ’em this time? There’ll be a purcession of ’em if they go on multiplyin’ and replenishin’ theirsels a’ this gate!”

“I seed t’ felly i’ t’ waggoner’s frock, and I seed t’ woman after him. She wur summat like nine feet high. She rose out of t’ ground, and kep’ on risin’, and I seed her two honds pressed upon her bress, but I couldna’ see her face for t’ hood as wur over it. They passed along, and I passed along—t’other way.”

Amos shook his head. He was, as he

said to Bess subsequently, “mithered above a bit” with the whole affair, and (privately) regarded his boon companions of The Safe Retreat as a “soft lot,” not excepting little Jake, whose head was clearly turned with over-much psalm-singing.

The butler at Dale End—a man of superiority and above all such petty superstitions as ghosts, warnings, and coffin-shaped cinders flying into maids’ laps as they sat round the fire—took all the chatter and wonderment among his fellows in the spirit of true philosophy.

“Just you wait,” said he, “till Master Ralph comes home. There’ll be brightness enough about the place that day, never fear, and the ghosts will all go packing back to—wherever they came from.”

At this hazy allusion cook shuddered, but smiled the next moment as she resolved to bake a monster cake of unparalleled richness for the heir’s home-coming.

Nurse Prettyman, with the reticence of an old retainer, took but small part in these discussions, which were, indeed, generally carried on behind her ample back.

Though for so many years a martyr to Mrs. Geoffrey’s whims and fads, she sorrowed sincerely for her mistress, and wondered how they should tell Master Ralph that she who had been his “pretty mamma” was gone for ever from the place that now should know her no more. For it was one of the squire’s whims that no one should write to Ralph to tell him of his mother’s death.

“I won’t have the lad travelling home with a heavy heart day by day,” said he, “and sad thoughts haunting his pillow night by night. Time enough to tell him when he gets here and has me by his side to comfort him. I tell you I understand the boy. I know him off by heart. You’ll see how tender and how wise I’ll be with him. You’ll see—you’ll see.”

And the vicar, to whom this speech was addressed, at once gave up the idea of sending a letter to Ralph’s tutor to catch the travellers before they should embark upon their homeward voyage.

Three weeks later, when Cuthbert Deane went to the Dale, he found its master eagerly and excitedly superintending certain Christmas decorations of the entrance-hall and library.

“I want the place to look bright,” he

said. "I want to let the boy see how welcome he is. There's no need to tell him of the sorrow that has come upon us in the first moment of his coming, is there? I should like to hold him in my arms just for a moment or two, and see the old bright smile upon his face—the smile that is like no other—eh, Cuthbert? He's such a happy fellow is my Ralph, and it is I who have made him so—I, his father, whom he loves, even as I love him." Then some compunction seemed to seize him as to his perfect content in the prospect of his son's return, a perfection that for the time being had swept aside the remembrance of his late bereavement. "Poor Lucy! poor girl!" he said, nervously playing with some berried holly as he spoke; "I little thought to be keeping Christmas without her. You see she was so often ailing—she was so seldom anything else. I had got used to it—it was sad, but it couldn't be helped. Being used to it, it didn't startle me, and then, as you truly say, Turtle's manner is apt to deceive—it is too conciliatory, too bland; but, my dear sir, it's worth a fortune to him! And what a good fellow he is, take him all round. Do you remember him when that fool Oxford shot at the Queen?—his pockets bristling with newspapers like a fort with guns, and his wig ready to stand on end. I like Turtle—I respect Turtle—and he's a loyal soul. A man's nothing if he isn't loyal—eh? God save the Queen!"

Here Geoffrey Stirling bared his head a moment, and then busied himself over his ivy, and holly, and Christmas-roses, as if there were nothing else on earth worth thinking about.

"It's the old story," said the vicar to his wife when he went home; "nervously excitable over this or that, flying from this subject to that, never sticking long to one. The donation he has given me for our poor this Christmastide almost takes away my breath; we shall have to feed all the parish on turkey and plum-pudding—that's what it is, dear! But where's Hilda? I thought she was coming over to-day to suggest all sorts of new and beautiful ideas for our church decorations."

"Mrs. Devenant is ill," said Alicia.

"Tut, tut!" said the vicar; "that's something new, in truth! But don't pull such a long face over it; no doubt the good woman will be better shortly. I should say her constitution was of iron."

Alicia could not help smiling. It was

so easy to tell by the tone of voice in which he spoke of her that Mrs. Devenant was no great favourite with Cuthbert.

"She has taken a severe cold, and is feverish," said Alicia.

"How do you know? Did Hilda write?"

"Yes, Hilda wrote, and I—went."

"A day like this! A wind to cut one in two! My pet, I will not have you running about after all the sick people in the parish."

"I haven't been running about after all the sick people in the parish. I've only been running about after Mrs. Devenant, and, Cuthbert, she's a nasty cross old thing!"

"Alicia!"

"I don't care—she is! She's cross and hard to—Hilda."

"Did Hilda tell you so?"

"As if she would!"

"Just so; then you heard it for yourself?"

"I heard it for myself; and I saw the colour flush into the dear child's cheek, and the tears start to her pretty eyes; and oh, Cuthbert, how she must wish she were back with the nuns of the Bon Secours."

"I am sorry you think so," said the vicar, beginning to walk up and down the room with his hands behind his back; "I am sorry you think there is cause. I dislike to think of people being unhappy just now—I mean when Christmas is at hand. One's heart always seems so full of those words, 'I am the light of the world;' one would like the Light to shine into all hearts, and to be dimmed by no carking cares, no lack of love and sympathy."

There was no lack of "love and sympathy" in St. Mary's vicarage to dim the shine of Christmastide; but there was "carking care" enough before Christmas Eve came round.

For such a stormy December had not been known for years, and was not Ralph upon the high seas? Gales swept the coast; ships in the many-mouthed harbour of Becklington broke from their moorings and were drifted away to be seen no more. Day by day the papers teemed with accounts of disasters at sea.

No one dare speak of fears to Geoffrey Stirling; and only by increased excitability and restless energy did the man himself betray the anguish of great dread that was gathering about him.

Davey heard him muttering to himself as he fidgeted about in the library; heard him wandering up and down in the night-time; once found him sleeping the sleep of utter exhaustion, flung upon his bed, all dressed as he was.

Alicia went to see him, and he made her sit beside him, held her hand in his, or gently patted it as he talked; told her of all the things that they would do when Ralph came home, and took her upstairs to look at the boy's room, ready as it was even to the smallest detail for its longed-for occupant.

Alicia thought she got through all this very well, for her heart was full to overflowing, and once—when such a gust of wind came that it seemed as if a giant hand grasped the house and shook it, while the ivy-sprays scratched wildly at the glass, and Gaylad lifted his muzzle and howled an answer to the blast—she had some ado to keep back a sob.

She was glad to cling closely to her husband's arm all the way home; glad now and again to shelter her face against his shoulder from the sleet that drifted so madly on the wind. There was a sense of healing and comfort in his near presence, in his love, his tender sympathy, that she had never needed more.

All her heart had gone out long since to that lonely restless man, Geoffrey Stirling, the man who called her old home his, and whose soul was bound up in the boy for whom he now agonised and waited.

As the vicar and his wife neared home, there came to them, muffled through the snow, the sound of St. Mary's bells.

"The lads are ringing in Christmas Eve," said the vicar; "in spite of storm enough to blow the old tower down."

But to Alicia the chimes had a sad foreboding sound, muffled by the thickly-falling snow.

The light and warmth of home had never been more welcome, and she hurried into the ruddy glow.

But only to start back with a cry.

There, in the doorway of the sitting-room, stood Davey—or was it his wraith?

In his hand he grasped a paper; his face was pale, his eyes on fire with a wild passion of pain.

"The 'Aladdin,'" he gasped. "She is gone down—with all hands. Good Heaven! it will break his heart!"

"Let us go to him," said the vicar, his own swarthy cheek matching Davey's for pallor, as he hastily buttoned the overcoat he had loosened as he came in.

Without a word Alicia tied her veil close about her face. Another moment and the three were out in the blustering night, with the ruddy light of home left behind.

"No one but I must tell him. Oh, who can love him half so well as I, or tell him half so tenderly?" cried Davey.

"It shall be as you will," replied the vicar.

So the task was Davey's.

The others waited in the hall.

Davey went in alone to the man who years and years before had carried him upon his shoulders, and sheltered him from harm.

Geoffrey Stirling was sitting by the fire-side, with Gaylad at his feet.

He was bending down to the old dog, and had laid his hand upon the sleek tawny head, when Davey came in.

He looked up, saw the drawn white face, the streaming eyes, the outstretched trembling hands, and, with a gasping cry, clutched the arms of his chair, and leant eagerly forward.

Flinging himself down upon his knees beside that staring figure, suing, as it seemed, for pardon for the pain he must inflict, Davey told his tale just in the words that first came into his heart to utter:

"Oh, master—master! The sea shall give up its dead, as well as the earth, when the dear Lord comes!"

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLIII. MR. PROSPER IS VISITED BY HIS LAWYERS.

MR. PROSPER had not been in good spirits at the time at which Mountjoy Scarborough had visited him. He had received some time previously, a letter from Mr. Grey, as described in a previous chapter, and had also known exactly what proposal had been made by Mr. Grey to Messrs. Soames and Simpson. An equal division of the lady's income, one half to go to the lady herself, and the other half to Mr. Prosper, with an annuity of two hundred and fifty pounds out of the estate for the lady if Mr. Prosper should die first,—these were the terms which had been offered to Miss Thoroughbung with the object of inducing her to become the wife of Mr. Prosper. But to these terms Miss Thoroughbung had declined to accede, and had gone about the arrangement of her money-matters in a most precise and business-like manner. A third of her income she would give up since Mr. Prosper desired it, but more than that she "would owe it to herself and her friends to decline to abandon." The payment for the fish and the champagne must be omitted from any agreement on her part. As to the ponies, and their harness, and the pony-carriage, she would supply them. The ponies and the carriage would be indispensable to her happiness. But the maintenance of the ponies must be left to Mr. Prosper. As for the dower, she could not consent to accept less than four hundred,—or five hundred if no house was to be provided. She thought that seven hundred and fifty would be little enough if there were no children, as in

that case there was no heir for whom Mr. Prosper was especially anxious. But as there probably would be children Miss Thoroughbung thought that this was a matter to which Mr. Prosper would not give much consideration. Throughout it all she maintained a beautiful equanimity, and made two or three efforts to induce Mr. Prosper to repeat his visit to Marmaduke Lodge. She herself wrote to him, saying that she thought it odd that considering their near alliance he should not come and see her. Once she said that she had heard that he was ill, and offered to go to Buston Hall to visit him.

All this was extremely distressing to a gentleman of Mr. Prosper's delicate feelings. As to the proposals in regard to money, the letters from Soames and Simpson to Grey and Barry, all of which came down to Buston Hall, seemed to be innumerable. With Soames and Simpson Mr. Prosper declined to have any personal communication. But every letter from the Buntingford attorneys was accompanied by a further letter from the London attorneys, till the correspondence became insupportable. Mr. Prosper was not strong enough to stick firmly to his guns as planted for him by Messrs. Grey and Barry. He did give way in some matters, and hence arose renewed letters which nearly drove him mad. Messrs. Soames and Simpson's client was willing to accept four hundred pounds as the amount of the dower without reference to the house, and to this Mr. Prosper yielded. He did not much care about any heir as yet unborn, and felt by no means so certain in regard to children as did the lady. But he fought hard about the ponies. He could not undertake that his wife should have ponies. That must be left to him as master of the

house. He thought that a pair of carriage horses for her use would be sufficient. He had always kept a carriage, and intended to do so. She might bring her ponies if she pleased, but if he thought well to part with them he would sell them. He found himself getting deeper and deeper into the quagmire, till he began to doubt whether he should be able to extricate himself unmarried if he were anxious to do so. And, all the while, there came affectionate little notes from Miss Thoroughbung asking after his health, and recommending him what to take, till he entertained serious thoughts of going to Cairo for the remainder of the winter.

Then Mr. Barry came down to see him after Mountjoy had made his visit. It was now January, and the bargaining about the marriage had gone on for more than two months. The letter which he had received from the Squire of Tretton had moved him; but he had told himself that the property was his own, and that he had a right to enjoy it as he liked best. Whatever might have been Harry's faults in regard to that midnight affair, it had certainly been true that he had declined to hear the sermons. Mr. Prosper did not exactly mention the sermons to himself, but there was present to him a feeling that his heir had been wilfully disobedient, and the sermons no doubt had been the cause. When he had read the old squire's letter he did not as yet wish to forgive his nephew. He was becoming very tired of his courtship, but in his estimation the wife would be better than the nephew. Though he had been much put out by the precocity of that embrace, there was nevertheless a sweetness about it which lingered on his lips. Then Mountjoy had come down, and he had answered Mountjoy very stoutly. "A lie!" he had exclaimed. "Did he tell a lie?" he had asked, as though all must be over with a young man who had once allowed himself to depart from the rigid truth. Mountjoy had made what excuse he could, but Mr. Prosper had been very stern.

On the very day after Mountjoy's coming Mr. Barry came. His visit had been arranged, and Mr. Prosper was with great care prepared to encounter him. He was wrapped in his best dressing-gown, and Matthew had shaved him with the greatest care. The girls over at the parsonage declared that their uncle had sent into Buntingford for a special pot of pomatum. The story was told to Joe Thoroughbung

in order that it might be passed on to his aunt, and no doubt it did travel as it was intended. But Miss Thoroughbung cared nothing for the pomatum with which the lawyer from London was to be received. It would be very hard to laugh her out of her lover, while the title deeds to Buston held good. But Mr. Prosper had felt that it would be necessary to look his best, so that his marriage might be justified in the eyes of the lawyer.

Mr. Barry was shown into the book-room at Buston, in which Mr. Prosper was seated ready to receive him. The two gentlemen had never before met each other, and Mr. Prosper did no doubt assume something of the manner of an aristocratic owner of land. He would not have done so had Mr. Grey come in his partner's place. But there was a humility about Mr. Barry on an occasion such as the present, which justified a little pride on the part of the client. "I am sorry to give you the trouble to come down, Mr. Barry," he said. "I hope the servant has shown you your room."

"I shall be back in London to-day, Mr. Prosper, thank you. I must see these lawyers here, and when I have received your final instructions I will return to Buntingford." Then Mr. Prosper pressed him much to stay. He had quite expected, he said, that Mr. Barry would have done him the pleasure of remaining at any rate one night at Buston. But Mr. Barry settled the question by saying that he had not brought a dress-coat. Mr. Prosper did not care to sit down to dinner with guests who did not bring their dress-coats. "And now," continued Mr. Barry, "what final instructions are we to give to Soames and Simpson?"

"I don't think much of Messrs. Soames and Simpson."

"I believe they have the name of being honest practitioners."

"I dare say; I do not in the least doubt it. But they are people to whom I am not at all desirous of entrusting my own private affairs. Messrs. Soames and Simpson have not, I think, a large county business. I had no idea that Miss Thoroughbung would have put this affair into their hands."

"Just so, Mr. Prosper. But I suppose it was necessary for her to employ somebody. There has been a good deal of correspondence."

"Indeed there has, Mr. Barry."

"It has not been our fault, Mr. Prosper."

Now what we have got to decide is this ; —what are the final terms which you mean to propose ? I think, sir, the time has come when some final terms should be suggested."

"Just so. Final terms—must be what you call—the very last. That is, when they have once been offered, you must—must——"

"Just stick to them, Mr. Prosper."

"Exactly, Mr. Barry. That is what I intend. There is nothing I dislike so much as this haggling about money—especially with a lady. Miss Thoroughbung is a lady for whom I have the highest possible esteem."

"That's of course."

"For whom, I repeat, I have the highest possible esteem. But she has friends who have their own ideas as to money. The brewery in Buntingford belongs to them, and they are very worthy people. I should explain to you, Mr. Barry, as you are my confidential adviser, that were I about to form a matrimonial alliance in the heyday of my youth, I should probably not have thought of connecting myself with the Thoroughbungs. As I have said before they are most respectable people. But they do not exactly belong to that class in which I should under those circumstances have looked for a wife. I might probably have ventured to ask for the hand of the daughter of some county family. But years have slipped by me, and now wishing in middle life to procure for myself the comfort of wedded happiness, I have looked about, and have found no one more likely to give it me than Miss Thoroughbung. Her temper is excellent, and her person pleasing." Mr. Prosper, as he said this, thought of the kiss which had been bestowed upon him. "Her wit is vivacious, and I think that upon the whole she will be desirable as a companion. She will not come to this house empty-handed; but of her pecuniary affairs you already know so much that I need perhaps tell you nothing further. But though I am exceedingly desirous to make this lady my wife, and am, I may say, warmly attached to her, there are certain points which I cannot sacrifice. Now about the ponies——"

"I think I understand about the ponies. She may bring them on trial."

"I'm not to be bound to keep any ponies at all. There are a pair of carriage horses which must suffice. On second thoughts she had better not bring the

ponies." This decision had at last come from some little doubt on his mind as to whether he was treating Harry justly.

"And four hundred pounds is the sum fixed on for her jointure."

"She is to have her own money for her own life," said Mr. Prosper.

"That's a matter of course."

"Don't you think that under these circumstances, four hundred will be quite enough?"

"Quite enough if you ask me. But we must decide."

"Four hundred it shall be."

"And she is to have two-thirds of her own money for her own expenses during your life?" asked Mr. Barry.

"I don't see why she should want six hundred a year for herself; I don't indeed. I am afraid it will only lead to extravagance!" Mr. Barry assumed a look of despair. "Of course, as I have said so, I will not go back from my word. She shall have two-thirds. But about the ponies my mind is quite made up. There shall be no ponies at Buston. I hope you understand that, Mr. Barry." Mr. Barry said that he did understand it well, and then folding up his papers prepared to go, congratulating himself that he would not have to pass a long evening at Buston Hall.

But before he went, and when he had already put on his great-coat in the hall, Mr. Prosper called him back to ask him one further question. And for that purpose he shut the door carefully, and uttered his words in a whisper. Did Mr. Barry know anything of the life and recent adventures of Mr. Henry Annesley? Mr. Barry knew nothing; but he thought that his partner, Mr. Grey, knew something. He had heard Mr. Grey mention the name of Mr. Henry Annesley. Then as he stood there enveloped in his great-coat, with his horse standing in the cold, Mr. Prosper told him much of the story of Harry Annesley, and asked him to induce Mr. Grey to write and tell him what he thought of Harry's conduct.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. II. OUR YOUNG MAN.

TWENTY years ago, if I had met Walter Tafnell anywhere else, I do not think I should have called him a young man, but at that date, in Shillingbury, he certainly had, by prescription, got possession of a sort of Tithonus freehold. I have an impression that if he had been transplanted

to another locality he would have been rated as a stout, middle-aged gentleman ; but we Shillingbury folks had taken to our souls the belief that he was a gay young fellow, and this belief we cherished, in kindly but rather illogical disregard of the flight of time.

I think we were a little proud of Walter, though I confess I am somewhat uncertain as to what could have been the foundation of this sentiment. Walter was a man who had never earned a penny since he was born, and if I were put to it, I should find it difficult to name a walk in life in which he could have done so ; but then, when I first won the honour of his acquaintance, he was well on the shady side of thirty. In his early youth he may have given signs of promise ; indeed, he must have done so, and in rich variety too, for I have heard that at different epochs of his life he had thought of gracing severally each of the learned professions, the army, the navy, and the diplomatic service.

The century was young when Mrs. George Gordon Tafnell, the widow of Lieutenant George Gordon Tafnell, R.N., who fell fighting at Trafalgar, came with her baby-boy to live at Shillingbury. The widow's means were slender, but large enough to allow her to take a pretty little house in Church Street. Her household was naturally on a small scale ; but Walter nevertheless was taught the doctrine that he would be bringing discredit on the family and offering disrespect to the memory of his hero father, if he should ever think of earning his living except in one of the genteel professions. Indeed, I am inclined to believe that Mrs. Tafnell tolerated the learned professions in their higher branches only, and that she would have deemed it a sacrifice of dignity if Walter had vouchsafed to become either a curate, an attorney, or a medical practitioner who dispensed his own medicines.

Being an only child, Walter was of course a genius. The clever things he used to say and the wonderful aptitude he had for picking up knowledge showed him to be one of those boys who want no pushing, and accordingly he was so little pushed that when he was ten years old he could scarcely read. At last, after many severe struggles with herself, the widow sent her darling to school.

The boy was well-disposed enough, but dull — just one of those boys who do require to be stimulated ; but the selfish

mother, in her unwillingness to lose the pleasure of her child's presence, had persuaded herself that he was just the very thing he was not. She shut her eyes to the fact that she was endangering her child's future by her present indulgence of a mother's fondness. Now, however, the time had come when she could no longer in decency give way to her inclination, and Walter was sent to a grammar-school in a neighbouring town. There was the free school in Shillingbury, of which Dr. Septimus Addlestrop, an Oxford man and a gentleman, was then master, and the widow did at first think of sending her precious charge there, just by the way of a breaking-in ; but farmers' and tradesmen's sons went there, and it would never do for Walter to sit at the same desk with such as these. The temptation to send him there was at first very strong, for she could then have him home every night, instead of every week ; but gentility finally prevailed, and Walter was sent, after much howling and lamentation, to the school at Offbury. One half-year saw the beginning and the end of his boarding-school career. The food was not good enough, the masters were coarse and low-bred, and the boys were not of the class he ought to mix with ; so Walter was taken away, and for the next seven years his educational charge became a sort of freehold for the successive curates who assisted the Rev. Mr. Unwin, our rector, to take care of the sheep committed to his charge by Providence and the master and fellows of St. Barabbas College, Cambridge. The rector, though seemingly as simple and as harmless as a dove, was in truth a very clever man at money matters, and by no means wanting in the serpent's wisdom. When his curacy was vacant he always looked out for a deacon wanting a title for orders, whose services he usually secured at a very low stipend ; but when Mrs. Tafnell gave out that her son would be educated at home, it is said that the rector was able to hire a brother labourer in the vineyard on terms still more favourable to himself, on the ground that the curate, by virtue of his office, would be able to reckon on twenty pounds a year, at least, as the reward for teaching Master Walter the humanities and the elements of mathematics.

When the time came for selecting a profession for her son, Mrs. Tafnell did not seem inclined to hurry herself any more than she had done in the matter of his

early education. Walter, having exhibited a strong liking for the pastime of swimming paper boats in the water-butt, was at once set down as an embryo Nelson, and his mother decided that he should serve his country in the Royal Navy. People told her that it was time for her to set about taking the preliminary steps, but she would dispose of these suggestions in an airy fashion. "Yes, I suppose for outsiders it is well to take time by the forelock, but you see, we are, as it were, in the service, and whatever may happen, I've no doubt but that a word from Sir John will make it all right for Walter." Then her advisers would drop hints about keenness of competition, limits of age, and so forth. "I'll never believe," she would reply, "that they will treat the son of a man who died for his country, just the same as if he were the son of a tailor or a cotton-spinner. Even supposing Walter should be a little backward in education, I'm sure our claims will outweigh any deficiency."

But alas for the poor silly woman's calculations based upon her country's gratitude! When she wrote to the authorities, and sent in her claim, the only answer she received was one to the effect that the boy was two years too old for admission. Then she bethought herself of that word from Sir John, which was to work such wonders. Sir John Hugnet was a west-country baronet and county member, and Mrs. Tafnell's father, a local attorney, as long as he lived, had acted as the baronet's election agent. Mrs. Tafnell had cherished exalted notions as to the power of county members, and this demand for a "word" from this potent magnate had been carefully kept in reserve for a serious crisis.

Now, when the crisis was at hand, she was taught the value of promises made at the time of a contested election. Sir John did not take the same view of his obligations to the memory of the late Mr. Bragget, as Mr. Bragget's daughter did. Mr. Bragget had indeed served him well, but these services had always been well-paid for, and Sir John declined to admit any further liability on his part towards Mr. Bragget's representatives. Besides this he had found out that people who are always speaking "words" to the powers that be, get into bad odour and obtain nothing they ask for. Then, too, he wanted particularly, before long, to speak a "word" in behalf of an influential constituent who was getting a little unsettled in his political faith; so he wrote a letter to the widow, assuring her

that the rule of age was one which the First Lord never relaxed, and advising her to seek some other walk in life for her interesting charge.

Then there was some mention made of the army, but the widow, when she remembered that as a soldier her boy might be sent away for ten years at a stretch to India, slurred this proposition over as quickly as possible in favour of another, very general in its terms, that Walter should take time to think over which he should select, the bar or the church, and for ten years Walter went on turning this weighty matter over in his mind, seemingly without getting any nearer to a decision. Till he was nearly two-and-twenty there was kept up a show of reading with whatever curate might happen to be located in the parish, with the view of his matriculating at Oxford. But the studies did not go on very systematically. It so happened that all Walter's instructors were inclined to give rather more than due share of their attention to the teaching of the manly exercises. With the Rev. Mr. Green he used to spend much time in a boat on the river. The Rev. Mr. Black was a famous cricketer, the founder of our club, and under his auspices Walter became an expert in the game. The Rev. Mr. Brown was given to the study of botany and geology, and he and Walter used to take long walks together in search of knowledge, so it was said. But soon it came to the ears of the rector and Mrs. Tafnell that scientific research did not occupy all their time. Pudsey Heath was a favourite botanising ground of theirs, and on the borders of Pudsey Heath there stood a certain rather well-known roadside inn, called The Shepherd and Dog. After a time a rumour was spread abroad in Shillingbury that the master and disciple sought Pudsey Heath, not so much to gather plants, as to drink beer and play skittles at The Shepherd and Dog. There were also rumours of cock-fighting and rat-killing, at which the two were present. How much truth there was in all this was never clearly known, but Mr. Brown left us to undertake another curacy soon after, and then Walter passed under the care of the Rev. Mr. White, who was incapable of teaching anything either mental or physical, and this gentleman remained his mentor as long as he could in decency be deemed to be in the condition of a pupil.

At the age of two-and-twenty, or thereabouts, Walter's educational labours came

to an end, and then began the process of "looking out for something." For some reason or other Oxford was dropped out of the programme. Mrs. Tafnell did not let Sir John off with that first request for a "word." She let him know she had been informed there were plenty of openings under Government for young men of good family—clerkships with good chance of advancement, in this office and that, where the work was light and the surroundings "genteel." Walter would have no objection to go as unpaid attaché, for a short time just to learn the business, at some foreign capital; and a post as Foreign Office messenger might suit him. Any of these good things, according to Mrs. Tafnell, were to be had, provided the claims of the applicant were put forward in a proper manner; but she could not get Sir John to see that it was his duty to provide her boy with a berth for life. His answers to her applications became shorter and shorter, but still she declined to believe that claims such as hers could possibly be ignored in the long run, so she kept her son at her apron-string, waiting for some one to help him, until it was too late for him to do anything to help himself.

And in the meantime Master Walter managed to amuse himself. He was, indeed, a very nice fellow. He was tall, handsome, well made; merry and good-natured to a fault. We liked Mrs. Tafnell, too, and were disposed to take Walter at her valuation; and this, I need hardly say, was a somewhat exalted one. We became accustomed to regard him as a young man with a great career before him, only waiting for the favourable opportunity to step forward into eminence.

But that step was never made. His mother supplied him with food, lodging, raiment, and pocket-money, but she gave him neither an occupation in which he might pass his time usefully and honestly, nor an education which might have enabled him, though an idle man, to find recreation in something better and higher than the sordid material trifling which is alike the business and pleasure of the unlettered empty-headed idler.

Walter had naturally always plenty of time on his hands, and he had a way of throwing himself with great vigour into any undertaking out of which no profit was to be made. He was the leader of all our sports and pastimes. Of course he was the captain of our cricket club. For years he was our most destructive bowler,

and sometimes in a match with rather a weak eleven, he would magnanimously put on some young fellow to bowl by way of encouraging young blood. The runs against Shillingbury would then perchance begin to mount up rather rapidly; but our partisans would never lose heart. "Ah, never you fear; just wait till Mr. Walter goes on; he'll make 'em alter their handwriting in less than no time!" would be the answer to any apprehensive or despairing remark; and, surely enough, when Walter did set to work, the stumps would begin to fly right and left like nine-pins. Season after season he was our tower of strength. The years came and went, and still that "appointment" was not forthcoming. After a time, indeed, Walter got stouter and redder in the face; and his movements in the cricket-field became more deliberate in proportion as his vociferations to the field to "look alive" became more stentorian. His bowling, too, was no longer so deadly as of yore, and on one ill-starred day a young gentleman from Oxford, the son of the rector of a neighbouring village, playing as a substitute, sent it flying for fours and sixes all over the field; but our eyes were blinded, and we never thought of reading in these warnings the fact that our young man was growing old.

In the winter, when the affairs of the cricket club were at rest, Walter devoted his energies to the management of the Shillingbury Choral Society and Musical Union. Somehow in Shillingbury music did not seem to mean the same thing as harmony—that is, social harmony; for our society, after a stormy existence of two years, would invariably come to grief before the third season had passed away. Walter seemed to be both the midwife and the undertaker of this musical Phoenix. Half-a-dozen times at least, in my recollection, was there a meeting called at The Black Bull Assembly Rooms at which some score of the inhabitants—Jonas Harper, the organist, always amongst them—would make speeches regretting the fact that there was no musical society of any sort in the town, and winding up, all of them, by requesting Mr. Walter Tafnell to take the initiative in calling upon the friends of harmony to rally round the good cause. After a certain amount of blushing and show of diffidence, Walter would consent, and from that hour he became the leading tenor, president, secretary, and treasurer of the society. The first season of the society was generally a brilliant one. There were three

concerts during the winter, and the first two rows at least of the reserved seats would be filled by county people. The second season, as a rule, began with some confusion in the financial affairs of the society, and came to an end in its utter bankruptcy. A meeting would then be called. Jonas Harper, the organist, would always be absent, and the management of the society and the conduct of some of its leading members would be sharply criticised. No one ever went so far as to propose a vote of censure upon Walter Tafnell. It was thought better to request that gentleman to settle the outstanding liabilities of the society, and repay himself out of the subscriptions of the coming year. This Walter would do; and I am inclined to think he fared worse by doing so, than he would have done under the sharpest vote which could have been proposed and carried on him and his musical misadventures.

Thus music would seem to be dead and buried amongst us, but as sure as sunrise and sunset, after the lapse of a year, or two at the most, another meeting would be called, and Mr. Walter Tafnell would be requested once again to invite the friends of harmony to rally round the good cause, etc., etc.

Walter naturally had a good deal to do with the construction of the programmes of the society's concerts, and some people used to say that his own name appeared rather too often in these publications. He certainly was fond of hearing himself sing; but his voice was a very pleasing one, what might be called a rich fruity tenor, and I used to think he was heard at his best in those tuneful duets from *The Indian Queen* and *Love in a Village*, which he generally sang with jolly Mrs. Haydon, the wife of a neighbouring squire, who was always one of the first to give a favourable response to Walter's invitation to rally round the good cause.

As a diner-out I need hardly say that Walter was in strong request in a place like Shillingbury. Our dinner-givers were not very numerous, and there were one or two houses to which Walter never went without a strong protest from his mother. "It's all very well, for you to meet these people at cricket or at the choral society, Walter, but it's quite another matter to go to their houses and hobnob with them. As the son of a father who wore the king's uniform I think you might hold yourself a little less cheaply." But Walter loved a

good dinner, and good wine, too, in moderation, and both of these excellent things were to be enjoyed at the hospitable board of Mr. Coomber, the chief miller and maltster of the place; or of Mr. Tice-man, who certainly had begun life in a very small way as a retailer of coals. It was a real grief to Mrs. Tafnell to watch the alacrity with which Walter would accept an invitation to either of the above-named houses, and the care he would take over his toilet in preparation for the feast. He was by no means so eager to respond to the bidding, which came about twice in the year, to dine at the rectory; or to grace with his presence the rather frugal luncheon-parties with which the Hon. Mrs. Chespare and her niece Miss Close used to regale the neighbouring gentry at certain fixed intervals. To her confidential friends she used to admit what a grief it was to her that Walter was not disposed to take pleasure in the things which were such a delight to herself. Ah, those were poor Mrs. Tafnell's happiest hours, the times when she could fasten on some unsuspecting stranger in Mrs. Chespare's drawing-room, and pour into a fresh ear the story of her own life, of her husband's heroic career and glorious death, of the future of her son, and of the profession he was going to adorn.

Walter let himself be dragged about to these meagre dinners and Barmecide luncheons in order that he might have a word of excuse to plead in favour of his attendance at those tables where vulgar profusion seemed to atone—although Mrs. Tafnell declared it never could—for certain deficiencies of polish and refinement.

At one period of my life I left Shillingbury, and was absent several years. I well remember the day of my return. As I walked from the station the first thing I saw was a handbill on the wall of the parish pound setting forth that a cricket-match would be played to-morrow between our club and the Wadlingfield Rovers. There used to be Wadlingfield Rovers, I remembered, years ago, and here, as a type of the stability of British institutions, was evidence that these knights errant of the willow were yet on their wanderings. Of course I went to the match, fully expecting to see Walter Tafnell at the wicket or bowling away with his ancient prowess; but, when I reached the ground, I looked in vain for the captain; for it never occurred to me that a Shillingbury eleven

could ever take the field except under Walter's leadership. He was not there, or, at any rate, I could not identify with him any one of the flannel-clad players who were fielding or at the wicket. Possibly he might be waiting to go in. Coming, however, to the scorer's table, there I found him; and, after our first greetings were over, he explained to me with just a little hesitation that he was rather out of sorts. He had played in all the matches up to this date; but he thought to-day he would give himself a rest. It was a good opportunity, as the Rovers had not brought up a very strong team.

After a minute or two I saw that Walter was in flannel, as indeed all cricketers ought to be on match days, whether they play or not; but the flannel in quantity was rather limited, and in form it took the shape of a gouty shoe. I was fully conscious in my own person of the strokes which Time deals to the best of us as years roll on, but I had never till this moment thought of Walter Tafnell in connection with growing old, and here in a second my idol was shattered. "Our young man" was no longer young. Walter's figure as he rose from the scoring-table, and limped along towards the luncheon-tent, was certainly not that of a youth. Had I looked upon it elsewhere, I should have said it belonged to a man who was already well on the downward slope of the hill of life.

Poor Walter has long ago "gone over to the majority." I knew very little of him in his latter days, but I do not think, from all I have heard, that these could have been very happy times for him. When his mother died, a large portion of the family income died also; and then Walter, when he began to feel for the first time in his life the want of shillings here, and sixpences here, set to work to earn a living in earnest. But, alas! it was not in the public services, or the learned professions. One day an announcement, printed as an advertisement in the county papers, and painted in larger letters on the garden door, proclaimed to the world that Walter Tafnell was in a position to supply the public with coals, ale and porter in casks or bottles, choice spirits, and wines of the finest growths. At first many people gave him orders just for the sake of friendly feeling, and though a few very fast friends continued to burn his coals—as he called them—for the space of a twelvemonth or so, no one was found to repeat an order for

the alcoholic beverages in which Walter dealt. They were too villainous for the most loyal.

Thus the wine and spirit business dwindled off to a vanishing point, the board was taken down, and Walter gave out that his income was sufficient for his wants without troubling any more about business. Then after a time old friends dropped off, and Walter, no longer endowed with the graces of youth, or a sufficiency of ready cash, found it difficult to make new ones. Solitude was unendurable to him. All his life he had scarcely ever looked into a book or a newspaper. The chit-chat of the town was now his one intellectual recreation, so he was driven to find company, not where he would, but where he could. At ten in the morning two passenger trains passed each other at the station, and at this hour Walter would regularly be found on the platform sauntering up and down, gossiping with the waiting passengers, and exchanging greetings with some one or other in the arriving trains. After this hour how he passed the time I cannot imagine. There was a long narrow strip of garden behind the house, and in this he used to potter about as the spring came on. But Walter's crops of vegetables usually turned out something like that harvest of worldly success which we, in our simple faith, used to fancy he would gather in when the time came. After working for a few days in clearing away the ruins of last year's weeds, Walter would put on his coat and leave off work, observing that, after all, it was just as cheap to buy vegetables as to grow them.

As long as Mrs. Tafnell lived, mother and son used to while away the evenings playing at cribbage, and after her death Walter felt the time hang intolerably heavy. In Shillingbury, as in most other country towns, it was the habit of certain of the smaller tradesmen and neighbouring farmers to meet over pipes and grog every evening in the market-room of The White Horse. In the days of his prime, Walter would certainly have felt his dignity outraged had anyone ever hinted that he might make one of the party in The White Horse club-room, but the devil of ennui drives hard, and, like necessity, makes one acquainted with strange companions. During the summer, instead of sitting in the beery tobacco-scented room, the frequenters of The White Horse used to adjourn to the bowling-green, and it was over a game of bowls that Walter Tafnell

first condescended to such fellowship. When the bowling-green was sodden with the October rains, and the fire in the club-room lighted once more, Walter still kept up his attendance; indeed, no one was more regular. It was the first time that anyone of the rank of a gentleman had ever favoured the club-room with his presence. No one ever spoke of Walter otherwise than as "Mr. Tafnell," and a certain arm-chair became his by prescription.

As years rolled on, and as Walter became a little uncertain on his feet, old Janet, the servant, who had been with Mrs. Tafnell in her last illness, would go on dark nights with a lantern to The White Horse entry, and there wait till her master should have finished his allowance of gin-and-water and tobacco. Then the pair would totter home through the dark streets, poor old Janet unsteady with age, and her master with quite as much Old Tom as was good for him.

A wasted life? Aye, that it was. A man turns his time to a poor use when he spends his youth in making a business of recreation, let him be a Newmarket lordling, a college athlete, or such a one as poor Walter. Evil days may come with old age, and then, woe to the man who has not gathered some store of higher, simpler pleasure in his passage through the world, which may serve as consolation when friends fail and the hours grow weary. Poor old Walter, the companion of a lot of petty shopkeepers and pig-dealers, shuffling along the street regularly as the clock struck seven to his evening "booze," is a subject for moralising, but not for moralising of a cheerful sort, and I, for my part, will let him go in sorrow rather than in anger. Any hard words which are to be expended should be flung, not at him, but at his silly mother, who taught him those same lessons of feeble snobbishness which are still, alas! the stock-in-trade of so many family teachers. Poor foolish mother! there are hundreds like you who mistake selfishness for affection; who, for their own gratification, keep their children idling at home during those golden moments of spring-time when the seeds of a useful life must be sown.

SOME NOTED EPICURES.

A VERY charming illustration by Bertall, serving as the tail-piece to a chapter of Brillat Savarin's *Physiologie du Goût*, represents a worthy curé seated in an arm-

chair, and conning his breviary, while his factotum Jeanneton, kneeling before the fire, is preparing his evening repast, and lifting the cover of a saucepan, the savoury steam arising from which may naturally be supposed occasionally to interfere with her master's devotions. Throughout the book, indeed, and in other works on the same subject, the French ecclesiastic is almost invariably described as a sleek and rotund personage and a thorough appreciator of good cheer; his epicurean propensities being more especially developed on meagre days, when such delicacies as a soup composed of the essence of crawfish, a salmon-trout, and a succulent omelette, are mentioned as not unfrequently gracing his table. Whether a similar refinement of gastronomy still prevails among the Gallic clergy of our own time we are unable to say, although our experience of them would rather denote the reverse; but it is certain that, at the period when Brillat Savarin, Grimod de la Reynière, and their illustrious colleagues flourished, more than one dignitary of the Church enjoyed the reputation of successfully emulating, both in theory and practice, the most renowned professors of the culinary art.

Few of these had a more indisputable right to the title of gourmet than Monseigneur Courtois de Quincey, Bishop of Belley, who, however, was once in his life the victim of a clever mystification. He had been told that in the asparagus-bed of his kitchen-garden, a gigantic specimen of that favourite vegetable had been discovered, gradually forcing its way through the earth, and surpassing in size the largest product of its kind hitherto seen; this excited his curiosity, and, accompanied by his entire household, he repaired to the spot, and soon satisfied himself that the account he had heard was not in the slightest degree exaggerated. Nothing could be more promising than the aspect of the phenomenon; and the bishop signified his intention, as soon as it should have attained maturity, of separating it himself from the stalk, for which purpose a knife was ordered, in special honour of the occasion, from a Parisian cutler. In due time arrived the important day when the asparagus had reached its full growth, the episcopal train assembled to witness the ceremony, and Monseigneur gravely prepared to transfer the dainty from its native bed to a dish borne by an attendant; when to his surprise and

mortification the knife encountered a hard substance, which turned out to be neither more nor less than wood. It afterwards transpired that this ingenious work of art—for such it certainly was—owed its origin to a waggish canon, by whom it had been so skilfully manufactured and coloured as to deceive the most experienced eye; and who had secretly regulated its elevation to the proper height. On perceiving the imposture by which he had been so completely duped, the bishop hardly knew whether to laugh or be angry; the merriment of his retinue, however, was too infectious to be long resisted, and the offending canon, instead of receiving a reprimand for his audacity, was graciously complimented by Monseigneur on his ingenuity.

Gastronomy in France, which had been at a very low ebb during the Revolution, regained on the establishment of the Consulate the prestige it had formerly enjoyed during the reigns of Louis the Fifteenth and his predecessors. From that period until 1830, in addition to those already mentioned, at least a score of celebrated epicures rivalled each other in their devotion to the pleasures of the table; the chief among them being the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, in whose magnificent hotel, banquets on the most sumptuous and luxurious scale were periodically organised for the delectation of his chosen familiars. From these his two inseparables, D'Aigrefeuille and the Marquis de Villeville, the former as prodigiously stout as the latter was abnormally thin, were never absent; and an anecdote concerning them, related by a contemporary, may be recorded here. They had both been invited, together with several other guests, to dine with their patron, and on arriving, learnt to their dismay that their host had been unexpectedly summoned to the council of state, and that the dinner would consequently not be served until his return. The first hour passed tolerably enough, but towards the close of the second the majority of those present, feeling their appetites wax every moment stronger, began to manifest signs of uncontrollable impatience, and listened eagerly for the wished-for sound of the ministerial carriage. D'Aigrefeuille and Villeville sat apart from the rest, touching pictures of melancholy resignation, but mentally bewailing their hard fate, and casting every now and then a despairing look

at the clock on the mantelpiece. A third hour elapsed, and then another, when at length the welcome roll of wheels in the court-yard signalled to the famished assembly that their troubles were at an end, and that their ears would shortly be gladdened by the long-desired announcement: "Monseigneur est servi!" Alas! it came too late, four hours of fasting had done their work, the craving for food had given place to an absolute incapacity of digesting it; as dish after dish went away almost untasted, the guests looked piteously at each other, and D'Aigrefeuille, unable any longer to endure so heart-rending a spectacle, took his leave on the plea of sudden indisposition, whispering to Villeville, in the words of Titus, as he mournfully waddled out of the room, "We have lost a day!"

Other notable gourmets of the period were the Marquis de Cussy, inventor of a cake which still bears his name; Camerani, a mediocre actor but excellent stage-manager of the Comédie Italienne, who employed his leisure hours in the composition of a soup, the materials of which were so costly as to be beyond the reach of the ordinary epicure; and Journiac de St. Méard, the same who during the Reign of Terror had miraculously escaped sharing the fate of his fellow-suspects in the prison of the Abbaye. According to contemporary accounts, it was his custom to take his place at table early in the morning, and never to leave it before night; and it is recorded of him that, having invited a friend to dinner, he pressed him to partake of a particular dish, which the other declined doing, pleading as an excuse that he feared it might not agree with him. "Bah!" contemptuously exclaimed Journiac, "you don't mean to say that you are one of the idiots who trouble themselves about their digestion!"

Nor must a certain priest be forgotten, whose elasticity of conscience in culinary matters was proverbial. Being invited on a fast day to a repast befitting the occasion at the house of a noted lover of good cheer, he was on the point of helping himself to a dish the odour of which singularly tickled his palate, when the lay brother who accompanied him enjoined him in a whisper not to touch it, adding that he had seen it prepared in the kitchen, and that the gravy was simply the essence of meat. "Meddling fool!" angrily muttered his superior, pushing away the dish with a sigh of mortification; "what business had he in the

kitchen? Couldn't he have kept it to himself until after dinner?"

We can remember many years ago conversing with an old gentleman who had been on intimate terms with Brillat Savarin and Grimod de la Reynière, and questioning him about them. "Brillat Savarin," he said, "was the pleasantest and cheeriest of men, but he had one defect: he liked his game high, and carried it in his pocket wherever he went, until the odour became so offensive that everybody got out of his way. His *Physiologie du Goût* had great success, but true connoisseurs will always prefer the practical science and originality of the *Almanach des Gourmands*. Grimod," he added, "the author of this inestimable manual, was inordinately fond of pork, and I recollect a dinner given by him at Villers-sur-Orge, on which occasion a delicately-prepared sucking-pig met with such general approbation that our host sent for the cook, and after complimenting him on his skill, declared his intention of bestowing on him a suitable recompense, and having ascertained on enquiry that M. Pierre's ambition was to marry a young girl whose face was her fortune, promised a handsome dowry to the bride, besides paying for the wedding dinner; so that the sucking-pig eventually cost him over six thousand francs."

During the Consulate and the Empire the most fashionable "traiteur" was Beauvilliers, whose splendid dining-rooms in the Rue Richelieu were frequented by the best society in Paris. Unlike the generality of his colleagues, he was equally renowned for his polished and courteous manners, and for the orthodox propriety of his costume; he invariably received his customers himself, and took infinite pains that everything set before them should be sufficiently tempting to induce them to repeat their visit. One day a gentleman, whom he recognised as a well-known marquis, came in and ordered a "suprême de volaille" (a speciality of the establishment), which in due time was placed on the table. Beauvilliers, happening to pass by at the moment, glanced at the dish, and in spite of the remonstrances of the marquis, pounced upon it, and delivered it to a waiter, directing him to have another prepared immediately. Then, turning to his indignant visitor, and deliberately savouring a pinch of snuff, "M. le marquis," he said, "you will pardon the abruptness of my proceeding, but the

honour of my house is at stake. I regret that you should be exposed to a little temporary inconvenience, but I cannot allow my reputation to be compromised by a failure."

Although Paris was naturally the headquarters of gastronomy, many of the larger provincial towns, such as Bordeaux, Marseilles, and Lyons, possessed their quota of epicures, who met at each other's houses, and held regularly organised banquets little inferior in magnificence to those of the capital. One of the chief promoters of these social meetings in Lyons was a certain Chevalier de Langeac, by no means an uncommon specimen of the genus "bon vivant," never backward in partaking of the hospitalities of his friends, but extremely chary of returning them. Being, however, generally regarded as an acknowledged authority in culinary matters, his presence was considered indispensable on grand occasions by the principal amphytrions of the city; and it was from one of these, a wealthy banker, the fortunate possessor of the best cook in Lyons, that he received an invitation to supper—a meal not yet fallen into disuse—on a particular evening in the ensuing week.

It is needless to say that he was punctual at the appointed hour, and discovered to his satisfaction that the party, ten in all, included the most noted gourmets of the locality; a circumstance, he thought, suggestive of a more than usually luxurious repast. Buoyed up by these agreeable anticipations, he took his place at table, where the first course was already served; to his surprise, it consisted of viands more remarkable for solidity than refinement; such as a sirloin of beef, a fricassee of chicken, a fricandeau of veal, and a stuffed carp, each excellent of its kind, but hardly suitable to so distinguished a company. Another singularity presently struck him; his fellow-guests without exception ate sparingly, one affirming that he was suffering from headache, another that he had dined too late, and a third that his digestion was out of order; in short, the chevalier was left alone to exert his prowess, which task he performed to the best of his ability. The second course was equally substantial, comprising an enormous turkey, a pike "au bleu," and a dish of macaroni flavoured with parmesan; and by the time De Langeac had done justice to all in turn, he felt that he had taxed his powers to their full extent, and was incapable of swallowing another morsel. Meanwhile, he fancied that he detected

certain ironical glances on the faces around him, as the servants removed the dishes from the table for the purpose, as he imagined, of replacing them by the dessert. Instead, however, of the usual display of fruit and post-prandian delicacies, what was his astonishment when a second repast appeared, composed of every imaginable dainty that the most fastidious epicure could desire; sweetbreads prepared with the essence of crawfish, roes of carp dressed with truffles, flanked by a profusion of ortolans and becaficoes, and—in those days an extraordinary rarity—a magnificent pheasant. At the sight of all these good things which he was unable to enjoy, the poor chevalier sat in speechless indignation; while, as if by magic, headache and indigestion were forgotten, and the whole party, with one solitary exception, began to sup in earnest. At this juncture the host, perceiving that the joke had been carried a little too far, bethought himself of apologising to his offended guest for the trick that had been played on him, and had already improvised the best excuse he could frame at a moment's notice, when De Langeac, rising from his chair, interrupted his harangue by reminding him that what had taken place was perfectly intelligible; "for," he said, "I believe it to be the usual custom that when a gentleman has supped, the lacqueys are entitled to the remainder." With these words, accompanied by a sarcastic bow to his entertainer, and a contemptuous glance at the other occupants of the table, he stalked majestically from the room, leaving his late companions to digest his remark in any way they chose. The chevalier's reputation, however, as a first-rate swordsman being proverbial, they probably judged it more expedient to swallow the insult; for it is not recorded that any further notice was taken of the matter.

The celebrated song-writer and vaudevillist, Désaugiers, was not only a staunch disciple of Epicurus, but also an intrepid votary of Bacchus; he was, moreover, proud of his corpulence, as the following distich, written by himself in a jovial mood, sufficiently testifies:

A quatre heures, lorsque j'entre
Chez le traiteur du quartier,
Je veux que toujours mon ventre
Se présente le premier!

He it was who, when offered some grapes after dinner, indignantly put away the dish, saying that he was not in the habit of taking his wine in pills.

When the illustrious academicians, Villemain and Victor Cousin, were young students, they generally dined together for the sake of economy, their modest repast consisting of a single dish of meat, with now and then a couple of apples, one for each, by way of dessert. On these gala occasions Villemain, who had a weakness for this supplementary luxury, never omitted to start a subject of conversation on which his companion loved to air his theories; and, while the latter declaimed and philosophised to his heart's content, quietly ate both the apples.

To the foregoing list of gastronomic celebrities may be added the names of three men of mark of our own time, Balzac, Alexandre Dumas, and Rossini. The first of these, although sufficiently abstemious in other respects, had an inordinate predilection for pastry and fruit, devouring, as Léon Gozlan tells us, whole dishes of Montreuil peaches and juicy pears with Gargantuan facility. Dumas considered his culinary manual a masterpiece far superior to the Mousquetaires or Monte-Cristo, while the composer of *Il Barbiere* was never so happy as when superintending the preparation of a dish invented by himself. "I was born to be a cook," he exclaimed one evening, while presiding at the supper-table of his villa at Passy; "and have altogether missed my vocation!"

"But, maestro," objected one of his guests, "in that case we should have had no *Guillaume Tell*."

"Bah!" contemptuously retorted Rossini, "anyone could have done that. Donizetti and Bellini can write operas, but if either of them were to try his hand at a 'timbale de macaroni aux truffes,' helping himself largely as he spoke to the delicacy in question, 'do you imagine for a moment that it would taste like this?'"

WAS IT SUCCESS?

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

THE Cardens went abroad; and Dr. Teggett continued to potter amiably through life. He devoted much time to the inauguration of his great work on exotic butterflies; bought all the materials for much writing, and then sat down and thought. His meditations extended over a considerable interval, for his original conception of a mere pamphlet had now swelled to octavo form; he still veiled his intention in obscurity, and was thus long

spared the mortification of learning that another Anglo-Indian had just completed and published a work on exactly the same lines.

Mrs. Carden and her daughter stayed abroad three years, and although they had twice during that period paid a short visit to England, Dr. Teggett had not had an opportunity of renewing their acquaintance. They had only stayed a day in London the first time, before joining Mrs. Gibbs at Scarborough, and when they had come over again the doctor had been visiting some relatives in the country. He had several relatives who were always glad to see him; people who spoke of him in a kindly fashion, and rather ostentatiously threw the mantle of charity over his little failings and peculiarities. They had a just appreciation of sound Indian investments, and were glad to get the doctor to act as godfather to their children. And yet he never made himself so pleasant among his own people as when visiting Mrs. Gibbs, which he did about twice in twelve months. During these visits he heard the latest news of Mrs. Carden, and how Miss Rosa was fast becoming all that the most exacting of mothers could desire. Certainly three years amid all the resources of Parisian art might be expected to work wonders, especially under the supervision of an ardent, clever little woman like Mrs. Carden; but the doctor could not picture Rosa to himself as other than the girl he had known, a black-browed, blushing maiden, who answered with a scowl and walked with a slouch.

One day, a few weeks before the Cardens were expected home for good, the doctor went to call on Mrs. Gibbs, and learn the final arrangements. He began to take a profound interest in news of any sort, and this is a sure sign of advancing age.

"You are too late, doctor," said Mrs. Gibbs, meeting him in her drawing-room; "they have taken us all by surprise."

Then he became aware of another lady in the room standing a little in the background. He experienced a slightly disagreeable sensation. The lady was very tall and very dark, and she advanced towards him in a sweeping manner.

"I see you don't remember me," she said, looking down on him from a superior height. "I am Rosa."

Her large hand enclosed his own, and her black eyes transfixed him. His first inarticulate reflection was:

"Lord bless me, how very black, to be sure!" and he meekly subsided into a chair, and stared in a bewildered way.

"Is she not changed?" cried Mrs. Gibbs. "I myself have never ceased wondering at her, and I have seen her since you saw her. But these last few months have done most of all."

"I see you would never have known me," said the black lady, smiling and showing her teeth. He remembered her teeth, which had always been good.

"No, to be sure I should not have known you;" but even while he spoke he began to see traces of the former Rosie. Her brows were as thick as ever, but they were no longer distressingly contracted; her colour was still high, but it had obligingly retreated into a brilliant spot on either cheek. Her black hair was rolled up around a shapely head.

"Dear, dear! it is wonderful!" said the doctor, polishing his glasses, and then putting them on. His first repellent feeling was passing away; he began to see points to admire in the woman before him. There was a well-defined dark shade upon her upper lip, which some people think admirable; the lines of her corsage were grandly filled; her hands were as white as constitution and idleness could make them. The transformation in her manner was even more striking. That so embarrassed a young person should have acquired such calm self-possession and repose was indeed a tribute to the air of Paris.

"Your mamma must be very much pleased," he murmured; "you have more than fulfilled her expectations, I should think."

Rosa laughed complacently.

"I should hope mamma is satisfied with me. She will be down presently, and then can tell you herself. She will have a great deal to tell you. She will want your congratulations on my good looks."

Mrs. Gibbs sat silent; she watched her niece, and appeared very much impressed by her.

Rosa got up and walked to the fireplace, two yards of yellow Indian cachemire trained after her on the ground; she leant her elbows on the marble, and regarded her reflection in the glass.

"I am improved," she said, smiling round, "I see it myself, but I am not handsome. I think I shall be a frightful old woman. Now mamma grows prettier every day, and takes longer in dressing."

"Your mother is not an old woman

yet," said Mrs. Gibbs, very conscious of her own age.

Rosa swept about the room, and sat down again opposite the doctor.

"I have learnt a great deal in Paris," she said, "but then I was so ignorant before. There was a time when I knew nothing of Paris except that it was the capital of France."

"That reminds me," said the doctor mischievously, "that you once said you never wished to leave Norwood. Things have changed a little since then—eh? By-the-bye, do you ever hear from your old governess?"

"You mean Miss Haverson? No, not often, poor thing! the last time she wrote she was in very bad health."

"You should go and see her, Rosa," said Mrs. Gibbs. "I think your worldly appearance would quite scandalise her."

Rosa leant back in her chair, and there was a suggestion of gloom in her voice.

"That is a good reason certainly," she said, "but I have no wish to add to her troubles. She would be too much pained by all I have lost."

"Rosa has become so enigmatical," said her aunt; "she is always talking of what she has lost, while we can only see all she has gained."

The door opened and Mrs. Carden came gracefully into the room. She was as fresh and as neat as ever. Hardly looking older, though at an age when every year tells, the contrast was very sharp between her petite prettiness and the almost masculine presence of her daughter.

"Dear friend, how good of you to come!" she said, taking the doctor's outstretched hands; "I have been wanting to see you so much. I was saying to Rosa only this morning that our very first call must be on you. How do you think Rosa is looking?"

"It is wonderful—wonderful!" said the doctor. "You have worked miracles."

Rosa again caught her reflection in the glass.

"Do go on; I am greedy of compliments," she declared. "I am so fresh to the sweetmeat I can swallow anything."

"Rosa received a great many compliments in Paris," said Mrs. Carden. "She went out with me a good deal these last few months. She was very much admired. Has she told you?"

"That she was admired? There was no occasion for that," protested the old man.

"Oh, how pretty!" cried Rosa, laughing. "You will make me blush."

But she did not blush at all. She seemed to have outgrown the propensity. She sat listening with a smile on her face, and her hands crossed loosely in her lap.

"I mean about her engagement. She has not told you that?"

"No, she did not tell me that. Who is the happy man?"

"He is a countryman of her poor father's. His name is Macdonald. He is so distinguished-looking, and I believe very scientific. He is a physician."

"You don't mean Dr. Macdonald, the aurist?" asked the doctor, rather surprised, for the light of Macdonald's science had come even to his knowledge.

"Yes, that is the man; but he has private means of his own too, otherwise it would, of course, have been out of the question; a professional man's income is so precarious."

"Dear me, I am sincerely glad," said the doctor. "I must congratulate you very warmly, Miss Rosa."

In Rosa's dark face there was a pleasurable excitement.

"He is so clever," said she. "I can't understand his falling in love with me. I am just as stupid as I was in my school-days—with a difference."

"That is the reason," declared Mrs. Gibbs. "Clever men don't want intellect in their wives."

She considered herself intellectually superior to her own husband.

"Robert—that is Dr. Macdonald, you know—was quite struck with Rosa the first time he saw her," explained Mrs. Carden. "It was at the Hardings'. Gertie Harding told me he immediately asked who that handsome girl in red was. Rosa had on a very pretty red silk gown."

"He declares now," said Rosa, "he did not say handsome, but odd-looking."

"I believe he is rather ashamed of falling in love at all," said Mrs. Gibbs. "He has always affected an insensibility to women. But his sisters say when once he gets an idea into his head, it quite carries him away. Rosa will have to teach him moderation."

"I am the happiest of women," confided Mrs. Carden to the doctor, when her sister and Rosa were busy with the tea-table at the other side of the room. "I think things are always made up to us. I mean if we suffer we are given our reward. You remember how dreadfully disappointed I

was in Rosa, and now she has grown so stylish, and is making such a good marriage. It would have been too bad if I had failed with her, but I had done nothing to deserve that."

Mrs. Carden often spoke as though Providence were somehow in her debt, and that all the good things she had received were but instalments of the sum total to be repaid her. This was a comfortable view to take of life, and enabled her to diffuse a sense of repose and security. You instinctively felt that so very worldly and charming a person could never be brought in contact with the unpleasant sides of life. You almost forgot in her presence that there were unpleasant sides. No one certainly could ever have the brutality to obtrude them on her notice.

"Miss Rosa has outgrown her early leanings?" asked the doctor. "I mean her rather sensational religious views—eh?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Carden, smiling, "she has quite given up all that. She laughs at herself more than any one now. Sometimes I think she is a little too advanced."

"Quite out-Herods Herod," called out Mrs. Gibbs from the tea-tray.

"You need not call me Herod, Carrie," remarked Mrs. Carden plaintively. "I'm sure I always do my duty. I am always vexed when Rosa will not come to church."

Mrs. Carden's religion belonged exclusively to the seventh day, when on her knees she gracefully conceded thanks for the success of the preceding six.

"I always went to church in Paris," said Rosa, bringing the doctor his tea. "I don't care to go in London; Englishwomen don't wear pretty bonnets."

"Do you go to church to see the bonnets?" chuckled the doctor. "What would Miss Haverson say to that?"

"Please don't remind me of the past," said Rosa, frowning; "I have much better things to think of in the present. I am going to a dance to-night. Mamma, don't forget we promised to go to the Hardings."

"Oh, my dear, I am sure you ought not to go! Think how late you have been up all this week!"

"I shall not feel tired when I am there. Nothing rests me like dancing."

"And I suppose you are to meet a certain person who can banish all fatigue?" said Dr. Teggett amiably.

"You mean Dr. Macdonald? No, he never dances; he does not go out much; he is always experimenting on something."

"You are so wilful, dear, about dancing,"

said Mrs. Carden in a tone of mingled admiration and reproof. "I don't think Robert quite approves."

"He had better approve," said Rosa. "I shall always dance whenever I can. I told him I would not marry him unless I might."

"Of course he agrees to everything now," said Mrs. Gibbs. "All men are lambs before marriage—even Mr. Gibbs was."

Mr. Gibbs had lately been particularly restive in the bosom of his family, while turning a countenance jollier and ruddier than ever to the outer world. His relations with his son had become somewhat strained. This young gentleman still continued to do nothing, and to get through a great deal of money. He had studied the lilies of the field, and while maintaining a graceful idleness, endeavoured to emulate Solomon in the matter of his fancy waistcoats. He looked upon his father as an unornamental necessity, useful for the creation of money, and he let this sentiment too openly appear on his fair and vacuous face.

It is rough on a man to sit at his own table and confront so unflattering an opinion; and that the holder of it should be coolly feeding off your beef and mutton and wine does not make it more easily borne.

Distressing scenes had occurred between father and son, and the former's temper had become short and his language damnatory.

These things created a slight bitterness in Mrs. Gibbs's breast. Lancelot was still the idol of her heart, but she almost wished he had never been born. She was, however, careful to conceal from the world and her friends, and even from her sister, the full extent of her anxieties; a clever woman knows she must encroach as little on her friends' sympathy as on their purses.

Rosa presently, with graceful apologies, took leave of the doctor to go and dress for dinner, and Mrs. Gibbs drew her chair nearer that she might indulge in a more confidential talk.

"How wonderfully well she looks—twice as well as when I last saw her; what have you been doing to her, Loo?"

"It is since her engagement; she used to get rather morbid fits before, but now the excitement has got into her head and she is always gay."

"And is she very much in love?" asked the doctor with the license of old friendship.

"Oh, of course," cried Mrs. Carden; and then, after an instant, with a little shrug: "Que voulez-vous? she seems very happy."

"People very much in love," remarked Carrie Gibbs, "are fatiguing. Dr. Macdonald is very fatiguing. He is essentially a man of one idea, and at present that idea is Rosa. Still it makes one almost anxious as to what his next idea may be."

"The only thing that makes me anxious is Rosa's health," said Mrs. Carden; "her chest is delicate, and she is so careless about wraps. She got such a bad cold last winter. I should not like her to get another cough before her marriage."

Until this great event, the doctor had many opportunities of seeing Rosa; he met her frequently in company with Dr. Macdonald, whose acquaintance he now made for the first time. Macdonald paid him very scant attention; he had an unmitigated contempt for the old fogies of the profession. He was a tall, rather good-looking man, of about eight-and-thirty, imperious in his manners, and consumed with pride of intellect. In general society he spoke very little, but when he did give an opinion, even on the most trivial subject, he enounced it as though it were an incontrovertible law of nature. Dr. Teggett was not attracted by what he saw of him, but then we are apt to feel prejudiced against a person who so plainly despises us, both for what we know as well as for what we fail to know.

The doctor, however, had the justice to admit that to Rosa, Macdonald behaved in the most charming manner possible. The very contrast between his rasping way in general, and his gentle manners to her, added to their fascination. He was, for the time, most completely and violently in love.

If Rosa also was in love, at least she did not let it appear so openly, but she certainly was immensely flattered by the preference of such a man, and lived in a whirl of mental excitement which added considerably to her good looks. She became really handsome, and even young Mr. Gibbs was heard to murmur that his cousin was become "a deuced fine woman."

At this period of her life Mrs. Carden declared herself perfectly happy. She drove round among her friends gathering up their congratulations, and felt best pleased when these were the most half-hearted. It only required the envy of less fortunate mothers to make her triumph complete. Then she could not say enough in praise of her son-in-law; he was so very distinguished, so courteous, and, everyone said, so clever. That after so unpromising a girlhood dear Rosa should make such a

marriage before she was two-and-twenty was indeed a triumph. The little woman was busy all day long. There was the refurnishing of the house in Brook Street to superintend, though Dr. Macdonald after all did most of this himself. Unfortunately he had his own views on furnishing, which he expressed with decision, and Rosa instantly agreed that his views were best. Mrs. Carden was vexed when he laid his veto on portieres and mantel-drapery. She had set her heart on an æsthetic drawing-room, rather dim and full of rich hanging-stuffs.

"I hate dark rooms," said Dr. Macdonald; "I won't have a curtain in the house, not even to the windows. Venetian blinds give all the shade I require; curtains are traps for dust, and therefore detrimental to Health."

He always spoke of health with a capital H. It was the only good he recognised. All he did was with a view to attain it. He regularly partook of fish to form phosphates in the brain. A particular kind of brown bread was the only kind he tolerated. He drank water, and insisted that everyone under his authority should take a cold bath every morning. The opposition of his domestics to this arrangement had first made him think seriously of getting married. A mistress could better enforce the point. He used dumb-bells daily, and sometimes clubs for a quarter of an hour before dressing for dinner. He regulated his life with an excruciating precision, and was careful never to use his right hand without counterbalancing it afterwards by a use of his left. He considered that nine hundred and ninety-nine men and women out of one thousand are crooked from an exclusive use of the right hand, and every case of deafness or ear-ache which came to his knowledge he irrefragably traced to curvature of the spine, and his patients were astonished and mortified to learn that they were not only deaf but deformed, and that the first thing to be done was to lie six hours daily on an inclined board he had himself invented for their delectation. When the horrified City gentlemen or stout country farmers protested against such a sentence, Dr. Macdonald observed with contemptuous pity:

"My dear sir, what is life without Health? What is the use of success, or money, or pleasure, unless you have Health to enable you to enjoy it?"

He was monotonous on the subject of Hygeia. For a time his love-affair had

displaced the goddess, but during the house-furnishing she threatened to resume her sway. In her honour, and to Mrs. Carden's annoyance, he abolished curtains, had all his wall-papers varnished, and would only permit strips of carpet in the bedrooms capable of being taken up and shaken daily.

In the matter of the trousseau Mrs. Carden had her own way, of course, and I am bound to say the articles were chosen on any but hygienic principles. Over the rival merits of silks and satins she was more eager than Rosa herself, but both ladies complacently spent dozens of hours every week in the mysterious occupation called "shopping." The amount of fatigue they underwent, and the quantities of vitiated air they inhaled in the pursuit of a few yards of lace or ribbon, was something heroic; but without sacrifices such as these, it is understood that no young woman could walk to the altar with a light heart and a consciousness of accomplished duty. Dr. Macdonald, though only called upon occasionally to admire some of these purchases, grew impatient at the delay. He thought Rosa could very well be married with fewer gowns.

"I shall be glad to get Rosa to myself," he remarked once to Dr. Teggett; "all this excitement is very pernicious to her. I consider her mother a fatiguing companion."

Poor Mrs. Carden! she who secretly looked forward to a prolonged visit to Rosa's new home, so soon as she returned from her honeymoon!

But ignorance of your son-in-law's opinion of you may usually be accounted as bliss, and when at length the final ceremony was performed, and the little woman had seen her child drive away amid the usual demonstrations, she sat quietly down to taste at her ease the full measure of her satisfaction. It is unfortunately rare that a man or woman can be found, who, if questioned, could answer that he or she is perfectly happy, but I believe that Mrs. Carden in those first few hours after her daughter's marriage would have honestly declared that she was so, and that there remained nothing more for her to wish for.

MY FIRST PANTOMIME.

"PANTOMIMES! pooh, nonsense, there are no such things as pantomimes! What you young people see nowadays are nothing but burlesques, and there's nobody to play in them but singers from the music-halls.

Now, when I was a young fellow, pantomimes were pantomimes. All was done by dumb-show, and scarce a word spoken till the good fairy appeared, and the clown said, 'Here we are again!' Pantomimes! Why, bless me, in the last one that I saw, some half a score years since, there were actually two columbines, and never a hot poker!"

"I say, by Jove, old chappie, you should go to the Lane. Lots of show, and all that, and the songs are awfully fetching!"

It was while I sat half dozing at the club the other evening that I seemed, in my mind's ear, to listen to these fragments of imaginary conversation. In my dreaminess, I fancied that the speakers I have quoted were talking simultaneously, one on either side of me; and it was easy to conceive, without opening my eyes, that some thirty years of contrast might be noticed in their ages. Awaking presently, and finding that the smoking-room was empty, I set down their remarks as proving my unconscious cerebral productivity.

I had been dining with a schoolmate, whom I had not met for years; and, after the discussion of such interesting matters as the cricket of our time, and the big hits we remembered, our talk had somehow drifted from the playground to the play, and had led to our deploring the decadence of pantomime. Being both of us past fifty, and there being nobody at hand to assure us of the fact, it was pleasant to compare our recollections of the stage, and of the stars that shone so brightly in those brave days of old, when, happily for us, no bad acting could be seen; for our young eyes were not critical, and therefore never noticed it. Old fogies after all have something to be thankful for. It is pleasant to remember the pleasures of the past, in spite of the conviction that there is little hope they will be equalled in the future. And there is a subtle satisfaction in comparing with old cronies the follies of one's youth, and finding that our friends were human like oneself in liability to error.

So when we two old playmates had warmed over our wine, we soon began to tell each other what bad boys we had been, and how very much young Pompey had been like the youthful Cæsar. Stirring from their hiding-place the secrets of our schooltime, we confessed in strictest confidence that we had envied the same harlequin, and copied the same clown, and with the same bewitching columbine had fallen both together hopelessly in love.

Ah, merry were the days when we were young; when, long before the muffin-bells had ceased their evening tinkle, we had taken our place boldly in the passage to the pit. There were no stalls then for gilded youths to sit in and suck their sticks or toothpicks, and simper their applause. As for what were then, as now, the best seats in the house, there was then no fee for booking, for there was nothing to be booked. You simply paid your money, and you took your chance. If you had courage to go early, you were sure, after a squeeze, of getting a good seat. No need then for young fellows to put on a white choker when going to the play, and lose an hour's cricket by cabbing home to dress. And oh, the joy of distancing your rivals in the rush, and of finding that your next-at-elbow neighbour at the door had somehow only managed to get to the fourth row, while you had reached the first! And oh, the fragrant smell of orange-peel that seemed to fill the theatre, and the frequent burst of merriment at some waggery of the gallery, and the thrill of expectation when the fiddlers ceased their fiddling, and the footlights were flashed up. And then how heartily we laughed, and how sniffingly we sympathised, and how lustily we clapped. And when the curtain had been dropped, how dolefully we drove home, and felt as though there now was nothing left to live for, except perhaps the lingering hope of being taken to the play again by some not distant relative on some not distant night.

While exchanging pet remembrances, perhaps it was inevitable that a couple of old playmates should prattle of their first pantomime.

"Recollect it! why, of course I do; how can you ask the question? What was it called? Why, let me see, Harlequin the Merry Devil, or The Great Bed of Ware."

"Why, bless me," says my friend, "that's the name of mine! Now you mention it, I feel certain that's the first I ever saw. Don't you remember how the demon disappeared through the big keyhole, and came up through the candlestick, and danced about the room with the extinguisher upon his head?"

"Why, certainly," said I; "and how the monster keyhole jumped about the door; and how there came a lot of keyholes, moving all about, to bother the poor fellow who wanted to get in."

"Yes, and what a jolly pantomimic key that was he carried, and what a bang there was when at last the door blew

open. But," added my friend gravely, "I somehow rather fancy that we've not quite got the title right; and you know, as an old lawyer now, I spot flaws in a title. Seems to me that Edmonton, or some such place, was named in it. I'll tell you what, old fellow," he continued somewhat meditatively, "in so interesting a matter one can't be too particular. I'll give old Stodge a look to-morrow, and see if he can help us."

It turned out that my playfellow was correct in his conjecture, for next evening I received a large blue business-looking envelope, headed with two dashes, "Immediate and Important," and containing an old playbill, with these words scrawled in pencil: "Dear old boy, you'll see that I was right, and you were not far wrong. —Yours, JOCKEY." (He couldn't ride a bit, but we always called him "Jockey," for the sufficient schoolboy reason that his father lived in Yorkshire.)

The bill was very badly printed on a huge sheet of thin paper, and was dated Friday, March 6, 1840; on which evening it announced that at Covent Garden Theatre would be presented Sheridan's comedy of *The School for Scandal*, "with the dresses and decorations of the date of the production of the play, 1777;" and with a cast that very possibly many an old play-goer must have in his mental eye, when he looks back with regret on the bright visions of his youth. He may easily conjecture how the leading parts were filled, if he recalls to mind the names of Farren, Bartley, J. S. Cooper, and Charles Mathews, with Madame Manageress Vestris (in no flourish of big letters) to play "my lady" with her usual fascinating grace. Nor will he find it difficult to guess how Backbite, Moses, Crabtree, Candour, Sneerwell were assigned, if he thinks over the drolleries of Harley, Keeley, Meadows, the delicious Mrs. Orger and the charming Mrs. Brougham. He may, however, find a sleeping memory awakened, and a quaint actor recalled, when he learns that Snake was played by Mr. Selby; and he may see a final proof of the completeness of the cast, when he hears that the small part of "servant to Joseph Surface" was given to that great pantomimist, Mr. W. H. Payne.

Oh, if we could but see these dear old stage-flowers blooming in the "Garden" once again, how joyfully we old fogies would welcome the glad sight! How gleefully we would pay our guinea for a stall, and even leave our dinner but half eaten at the club, if the play began at seven, as

it did two score years since. "Dress-boxes, seven shillings," says the playbill of March 'Forty (nobody ever dreamed then of asking for a "programme"), and there is the option of paying half the money for what is termed the "second price" at nine o'clock. These, let it be noted, were the swell seats in the house, for stalls were not invented then, and admission to the pit was granted for three shillings, or a third less at half-price. Yet theatres were somehow made to pay at those old prices, and both of the big houses, the "Garden" and the "Lane," were somehow managed to keep open for most of the twelve months. Madame Vestris, it is true, was a trifle too extravagant; and, though ever gay and sprightly as an actor, her "Charley" was a sad fellow when acting as a financier, so it was scarce surprising that they should come to grief. But Macready did not find that "Shakespeare spelt bankruptcy," as was alleged not long ago by one of his successors, who did not himself succeed.

Moreover, although the plays were nearly all well mounted, there were no long runs then, no "Hundred Nights" successes; and the big theatres had each a double company to pay. A piece was seldom given more than twice or thrice a week, and the performers had no fear of growing weary of their parts. Thus in the bill for Friday, March 7, 1840, it was announced that on Monday would be given Sheridan Knowles' play of Love, when the (doubtless rather heavy) part of Count Ulrick would be played by Mr. Diddear (dear ponderous old Diddear!), that of Katherine by Madame Vestris, and that of the Countess of Uppenstein by Miss Ellen Tree; to be followed by the farce of Patter versus Clatter (with, of course, young Charley Mathews as the patterer and clatterer); and to conclude with the "grand allegorical and national masque, entitled The Fortunate Isles; or, the Triumphs of Britannia," which was also advertised for Saturday the eighth. On Tuesday, the comedy of The Rivals would be given, with Sir Anthony, Mr. Farren; Captain Absolute, Mr. Anderson; Bob Acres, Mr. Harley; and Sir Lucius, Mr. Brougham. While the lady parts were fitted to a vastly charming trio, namely: Lydia, Madame Vestris; Julia, Mrs. Nisbett; and Lucy, Mrs. Humby—pert piquant Mrs. Humby with doubtless her pet curl. On this evening the performance would conclude with the pantomime, to be played on that occasion for the five-and-fortieth time.

And this is what the playbill says of my first pantomime, which I probably had seen a month or so before; but woe is me! I cannot now recall with due precision the memorable date of that rapturous First Sight. With no flourishing of trumpets, or boast about its being the Biggest Thing that ever had been put upon the stage, it is quite simply styled an entirely new and romantic and legendary comic Christmas pantomime, called Harlequin and the Merrie Devil of Edmonton; or, the Great Bed of Ware. The scenery by Mr. Grieve, T. Grieve, and W. Grieve. The machinery by Mr. Sloman. The mechanical changes, transformations, and decoration by Mr. W. Bradwell.

And this is how the characters and scenes are introduced. I quote the words exactly as they follow in the playbill, although they may, perhaps, appear a little puzzling, when not put in playbill print:

"Palace of Pantomime, in the Province of Fun. Mother Goose, Mr. Granby; Mother Bunch, Miss R. Isaacs; Mother Shipton, Mr. Ireland. The Smithy of Oliver Smug, with distant view of Edmonton by moonlight. Maister Oliver Smug (the Village Smith, afterwards Clown), Mr. Ridgway; Edwin the Hunchback (his apprentice, afterwards Harlequin), Mr. C. J. Smith. Watermill belonging to Maister Peter Banks, the Miller. Maister Peter Banks (the Miller and Maltster, afterwards Pantaloon), Mr. Morelli; Gertrude (the Miller's daughter, afterwards Columbine), Miss Fairbrother; King Henry the Eighth (the flower of chivalry), Mr. S. Smith; Maister Harrison Saxby, of Lankysire (His Majesty's Master of the Horse), Mr. W. H. Payne. Dwelling of Maister Peter Fabell and Asbestos, the Merrie Devil. Maister Peter Fabell (called the Magician of Edmonton), Mr. S. Jones; Asbestos (the Merrie Devil), Mr. Gibson. Gallery and Staircase in the George Inn, leading to the Haunted Chamber. Ancient Chamber in the George Inn, in the centre of which stands the Great Bed of Ware (Mr. W. Bradwell). Grand moving Panorama, painted by Messrs. Grieve, of the Clyde, from Glasgow to Eglintoun," concluding, as a climax of attraction, with the mention (in big letters and a line all to itself) of The Tournament of Eglintoun, which was doubtless one of the chief magnets of the piece, though not a vestige of its beauties remains in my memory.

Among the details as to prices, and the booking of box-seats, which are given in

the playbill, is a statement that "Season Tickets may be had on application at the Box-office," and that private boxes were to be hired "solely of Mr. Andrews, bookseller, 167, New Bond Street." Imagine Mr. Irving parting in this wholesale way with all his private boxes; and fancy the advantage of a season-ticket nowadays, with the privilege of passing in, night after night, a hundred or two running, to see the same piece acted by precisely the same people!

While this old playbill lies before me, to refresh my latent memories, what can I call to mind of the fun of my first pantomime? I fear but very little. Much as doubtless I enjoyed it, I blush to say I cannot even remember the clown, nor have I the faintest recollection of his pranks with the hot poker. Indeed, the harlequinade is utterly a "blank in faithless memory void," and my remembrance is confined entirely to the opening. Dimly I remember the "business" of the keyhole (alluded to already), and rather more distinctly I can call to mind the scene of the haunted sleeping-chamber, wherein the merrie devil first made his appearance by rising to slow music jocosely through the bed-candle, and then capered about grotesquely with the extinguisher upon his head. Distinctly I remember, too, some portion of the troubles that ensued upon his entrance, his mission being to disturb the sleep of Maister Saxby, whose mastery of a nightmare was clearly not comprised in his Mastership of the Horse—how the pantomimic articles of toilette seemed "possessed," and the warming-pan behaved in a manner most provoking; how, when at last the victim was cosily tucked up, and had probably evoked a snore from the trombone (a detail I forget, but have little fear in fancying), then cats began to caterwaul and dogs to bay the moon, and lo! the hangings of the Great Bed grew suddenly transparent, and showed countless moving shadows of nameless creeping things, and unhappy Maister Saxby, after vainly courting slumber, was forced upon the floor, and fell vanquished in a bolstering bout with a gigantic flea.

Of what happened afterwards my mind has not a trace. The "grand moving panorama" has moved quite out of my memory, and of the many yards of coloured canvas that it covered I cannot now recall one single painted inch. Nor can I recollect the transformation scene, nor any of the comic characters and incidents which doubtless attended the pantaloons and

clown. Baker, Mr. Crusty; Grocer, Mr. Mixem; Milkman, Mr. Chalker; Butcher, Mr. Buybuy; and Laundress, Mrs. Scrub—of these important persons the playbill makes no mention, nor have I the faintest remembrance of their doings, or of the butter-slides, and baby-stealings, and general perturbation which attend the pantomime course of street traffic and trade. There is, indeed, a misty notion, vaguely floating in my mind, that one of the tricks consisted in the changing of a stable (with the placard of "A Mare's Nest") to a full view of the Mansion House (with the placard still affixed). But, except this brilliant sample of the punning of the period, I can remember not a vestige of the merriment and movement which were put in my first pantomime by the harlequin or clown. Even the charms of the fair columbine, as first she gleamed upon my sight, have faded from my mind, although I can distinctly recall how I was smitten by them when, a season or two later, she played the dashing captain of the Forty Thieves.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II. CHAPTER IX. HUNTED DOWN.

IT was said that Geoffrey Stirling had borne the double blow "wonderfully well." He certainly appeared to do so, and such as could not tell numbness from resignation might well think so.

County magnates called at the Dale "to enquire," left cards, and rode away content with the account given of the squire's state of health.

They had opened social arms and received Geoffrey Stirling and his wife as of their own "set" from the first. True, both might have adorned any position in society, county or otherwise; but not in that view of the question lay the pith of the matter. Mothers with daughters to marry could not forget that Dale End was a splendid property with "the most delightful historical associations," that it would be "an absolute sin" to let such a fine old place drop from the county, and, in short, "for the sake of the dear girls," all shortcomings (had there been any such to overlook) would have been glossed over in the father and mother of that "charming young fellow," Ralph Stirling.

As it was, the squire himself was voted "so" interesting; and Lucy a "dear sweet

sufferer;" while Ralph, listening to the comments of various matrons of position upon his mother's delicate beauty, thought how full of kindly feeling was the world in which he found himself a central figure.

Now all was changed.

That delicately beautiful mother had passed away; that bright central figure, the young heir, had been blotted out from the social landscape; and the county was conscious of a dark brooding cloud over its Christmastide.

Husbands and brothers, matrons and maids, grieved for the young life cut off in its gracious adolescence, its rich promise of good things to come.

Lady Boscawen (wife of Sir Denby Boscawen of Earl's Cragg) shed tears from out of the fulness of her motherly heart, as she thought of Ralph's bonnie smile, a light put out by death's cold cruel hand, a something blithe and winsome that had warmed the world whereon it shone. She also regarded her daughter Ethel as a being defrauded of a fair prospect once opening out before her young feet.

"How well the dear boy's voice blended with Ethel's! They seemed born to harmonise; and oh, Denby, to think of that poor man's loneliness in his doubly desolate home!"

As Lady Boscawen spoke, tears chased each other down her long aristocratic face, and Sir Denby, much moved by the sight of his lady's sorrow, promptly ordered his steed and rode in hot haste to the Dale, brimful of sympathy for its luckless owner.

Sir Denby's face was round and jovial by nature—in fact a happy antithesis to the long thin features of his spouse; but on his return from that day's ride it wore a look that made it almost haggard. He sat by the fireside with his hands thrust into the depths of his breeches-pockets, trying to stare the fire out of countenance; he whistled through his teeth, but the attempt at cheerfulness proved a failure.

"Dear me!" said Lady Boscawen, gliding in, and taking her stand behind his chair; "is anything the matter, Denby? Is Mr. Stirling——"

"I wish I'd never gone—that's what's the matter. The man—the fellow, you know—told me his master was as well as any one could expect 'under the circumstances,' and I got my foot in the stirrup, and was going to fling my leg across the pigskin, when Stirling passed across the hall from

one room to another. Gad! I felt like dropping, I can tell you."

"What did he look like?" asked Lady Boscawen breathlessly.

"What did he look like? Why, like some hunted animal brought to bay; a glare came into his eyes as he saw me, like I've seen in those of a stag as it turns to face the dogs—a look that froze my blood. I stood there, I tell you, stammering and staring, and the man—the fellow, you know—seemed afraid too."

"Afraid!" echoed her ladyship. "Of what?"

"Nay, how should I know? How should I know anything, if you come to that? What have I ever done to Stirling that he should look at me like that? Haven't I taken him by the hand—and held on, too—from the first day of his coming to Dale End? Haven't I been a staunch friend to him all along, and had that lad of his running about the place like a tame cat? Not that the boy wasn't welcome. He's one that has but to show his face to be welcome anywhere—that is, he was, you know," said Sir Denby, not a little flurried.

"What did Mr. Stirling say to you?" persisted Lady Boscawen, wiping away a tributary tear at that change from "is" to "was" in her husband's rambling talk.

"What did he say? What do you suppose, now? It was growing a bit dusk, you know, and who he took me for the devil only knows—what he said was this: 'Spies! spies!'"

"Denby!"

"Oh yes, you may say 'Denby' as often as you like, but that's what Stirling said. The fellow heard it too. I saw him gape at his master, and then the whole thing passed like a shadow, you know."

"No, I don't know. Why can't you tell me? What passed?"

"The—fancy, or whatever it was. Stirling pushed back his hair—you know his way—and came forward with a smile to give me greeting. I tell you I felt—anyhow."

"What did you say?"

"What did I say? Nothing. It was Geoffrey did all the talking. He had a black scarf about his neck, fastened by a small diamond-pin. He fingered it as he talked. 'This was Ralph's,' he said. 'He was always a careless fellow. I found it by the toilette-glass in his room, lying there

just as he had taken it off and laid it down. He was fond of it. I gave it to him last Christmas Day.' He spoke as if he was talking to himself, not to me; then he gave a sharp look at me and said: 'You have come all this way in the snow to ask for me. How kind—how kind! Is Lady Boscawen well? And my little friend Ethel—how is she?'"

By this time Lady Boscawen had entirely subsided into her pocket-handkerchief, and Ethel, her bright hair streaming over her shoulders, having come into the room and stood listening with wide eyes to her father's story, cast her arms about her mother's shoulders, while the two wept together.

"By Jove! but this is a cheery way for a man to keep New Year," said Sir Denby, beginning to perambulate the room with his hands thrust into the lappet pockets of his shooting-jacket; "but I don't blame you—I don't blame you. I'm ready myself to wish that Cuthbert Deane might forbid the lads ringing the New Year in this time; and I tell you what it is—they may say what they like about Geoffrey Stirling bearing up wonderfully under the circumstances; they may talk what confounded trash they choose—they haven't seen him, and I have; and I tell you the man is crazed with grief—mad as a March hare with the pain of the gaping wound in his heart."

Was this truly so? Had sorrow dazed the clear brain? Had pain been too bitter, agony too keen? Had the astute mind, the shrewd intelligence, become warped and twisted, so that distorted images passed before the mental vision, things real and things unreal mingling in wild confusion?

"What will come of it all? Oh, Cuthbert, what are those fixed sad eyes for ever watching?" said the vicar's gentle wife, wrought up to many a pitiful foreboding. "Do they see the cruel waters closing over that bright young head? Does he listen for the sound of the beating waves, for the sound of a cry coming over the waste of the waters—a cry for help where help was none? Is it thoughts like these that hold him silent, as he sits gazing somewhere far away—with Gaylad's head upon his knee, and poor Davey watching the two? What can we do—what can we do?"

"Nothing," said the vicar, laying his hand gently on Alicia's shoulder; "save wait, and watch, and pray. The man is

stunned as yet, but the waking must come, and then—nay, I know not what—still, only what Heaven wills can come."

There was silence for a few moments, and then Cuthbert Deane spoke again.

"Dear wife, I have to make confession: I have been unjust—I have judged one of God's creatures too hardly. Mrs. Devenant was here this morning."

"Yes?"

"She came to ask after Geoffrey Stirling, and, for the first time in our acquaintance, my heart warmed towards her. I have thought her cold—hard—nay, at times, cruel."

"So she is," put in Alicia, with (for her) a determined air.

"So she is not," retorted the vicar, equally determined. "Her lips trembled—actually trembled as she asked for news of our friend. She was paler than even her recent illness justified. It may be that this sorrow of Geoffrey's has brought back the memory of her own trial, years ago. You remember, dear, that Gabriel Devenant was—drowned? A buried sorrow often seems to rise again, in the fresh sorrow of another."

"Was Hilda here?" said Alicia.

"Yes; and she too seemed unlike herself—that sweet grave calm, that hangs about her like a delicate garment, was ruffled. The unwonted agitation of the mother stirred her too; perhaps some deeper influence. I could almost have fancied from what I heard to-day that some attachment had existed between the child and—Ralph."

"A couple of children—a mere boy and girl," said Alicia incredulously; "and a pair that hardly ever chanced to meet—could hardly chance to meet anywhere save here—to say nothing of difference of position, Cuthbert."

"Yes; I know the idea seems far-fetched. And yet——"

"And yet what?" this impatiently.

"Well, this. Davey happened to be coming in as Hilda and her mother were leaving my study—you were out, you know, my dear, on household cares intent—and the girl lagged behind to speak to him, or rather, as it seemed, to look at him. Davey caught her hand in answer to the look, and I heard him say: 'What is it, Hilda? Are you in any trouble? Why do you look like that?'"

"Well, what did my dear girl say?"

"Pressed her hand over her eyes as if to press back tears, and said: 'I do not

know—I cannot tell, but, Davey, I am full of fear.”

“How strange! What did Davey answer?”

“He said, ‘This comes of listening to ghost stories by firelight,’ and then they both laughed, but Hilda’s laugh sounded forced, I thought, almost hysterical. Her mother, at the sound, turned and beckoned to the girl to hasten on. Then I saw a look of unmistakable and troubled fear in Hilda’s eyes, but Mrs. Devenant was smiling back at Davey. Heavens! what a beautiful woman she must have been once upon a time, Alicia. You realise something of it, even now, when her face lights up like that.”

“I know, I have seen it; but to me it is always the beauty of some fierce and cruel animal; it repels me, it never draws me near.”

“Still,” said the vicar, “Hester Devenant is a woman who could charm—if she willed to charm, and strangely enough she seems to care to charm poor Davey.”

“By the way,” said Alicia, “when the other two were gone, what did Davey say?”

“At first nothing. He stood by the window, watching the mother and daughter walk down to the gate. Then, when they were out of sight, he came and sat down by my writing-table, leaned his arms upon it, and began to speak to me of his master.”

“Of Geoffrey Stirling?”

“Yes; he told me of a strange mood that seized upon him yesterday, a sort of frenzy, as it seemed to me. Sir Denby Boscawen rode over to the Dale to enquire after the squire, and, as it happened, saw him crossing the hall. In a moment Stirling seemed roused to a sudden fury. Davey, coming down the tower-stairs, heard him mutter to himself, saw a wild look upon his face, and was hastening forward in fear and amazement, when the mood passed, as it had come, in a moment, and our friend was himself again.”

“How strange!” said Alicia.

“Worse than strange,” replied her husband, “for it passed but to come again. When Davey entered the library that same evening, he was met by the same look, adjured to ‘play the spy no more,’ dismissed with averted looks and harsh words—things new indeed to Davey from his master. I have seen sorrow clothe itself in strange guise, but never in such guise as this. I shall go up to the Dale early to-morrow. I am full, dear wife, of dark forebodings.”

Was not Davey also full of fear? The ghost that walked in the dark shrubberies, beneath the pall-like shadow of the yews, and by the shimmering lake, could not be a more restless thing than Davey in these evil days that had come upon Geoffrey Stirling. Afraid to enter the beloved presence, lest he should be driven forth by hard words; full of a loving trembling fear that could not sleep; he wandered from silent room to silent corridor, here, there, and everywhere, yet always returning, like the bird to its nest, to the near neighbourhood of the chamber where sorrow was struggling so fiercely to break a human heart.

Hitherto Geoffrey Stirling had been stunned by the weight of his own suffering. Nay, more: he had been willing to be stunned; glad to be deadened, lifeless, wrapped in a torpor that dulled each sense, and spread a filmy veil between himself and all sight and sound around him. If any prayer at all could have arisen from his dulled heart, it would have been this: “Oh, God, let this torpor hold me still!”

As the frost-bitten wayfarer shrinks from the return to life that means immeasurable agony, so this wounded creature dreaded the immeasurable pain of coming to look upon the story of Ralph’s death as something that had happened to himself—something that had cut deep and clean to the root of his own life, rendering it a barren and blighted thing for evermore—instead of as a tale told to a man whom he pitied, pitied from the very depths of his soul, but who was not, could not be Geoffrey Stirling.

Was he not called the luckiest man in Becklington? Was he not spoken of as the man who had added land to land and gold to gold? Was it likely fortune would scatter her choicest gifts upon him, and then strike so cruel a blow straight at his heart?

Someone was drowned. It was a pity. Troubles are harder to bear at Christmastide, because the whole world is then bidden to rejoice in the coming of the Prince of Peace, and someone must be in trouble dark and deep, since someone (a young boy, they said, and homeward-bound) was drowned.

Gabriel Devenant was drowned. Bah! a chill and gruesome death to die—to sink away out of sight while the waters close above your head.

How still the night is!

Geoffrey Stirling sits by the fire alone,

save for Gaylad stretched at his feet. He lies back in his easy-chair ; he breathes heavily, like one who is very weary and whose heart labours at its work. His deep-set eyes are dim ; more than ever sunken in their leaden orbits.

And thoughts come and go in his dazed brain. But under this turbid current of unreal and dreamy thought, is a something stirring, sluggishly it is true, yet with an ever increasing power and impetus.

Realisation is coming ; the frozen blood is moving in the frost-bitten limbs ; the dreamer is awaking to the truth of what has taken hitherto but the semblance of a vision—a thing far off, not near.

"Ralph—Ralph—my boy !"

After all, it is not "someone" who is drowned. It is the child of his love, the idol of his life, the creature for whom he has lived, and hoped, the creature for whom he has—sinned.

And now, mingling with the suddenly realised anguish of loss, comes the thought of that sin—the sin that has been sinned in vain—that now drops to earth, a motiveless, soulless thing, as dead and valueless as the garment of mortality when the spirit that once animated it has flown.

"I did it for Ralph—for Ralph," he mutters, shrinking further and further back in his chair, as though cowering away from some ghastly presentiment of a crime-stained self staring at him from out the red glow of the living coals. "I did it for Ralph !"

How still the night is !

An hour or two more of life is all that remains to the old year—the year that has robbed him of his only son—the year whose successor seems a blasted, blighted thing to him, even ere it is born.

The frost is keen to-night. It grips the trees like a vice. They groan and creak under the pressure. Other sound is there none.

Once Nurse Prettyman, urged thereto by Davey, opens the library door softly, and peers in.

It is growing late, she says, will not the master take something ?

At this, anger, distrust, defiance blaze up in Geoffrey Stirling's eyes.

"What," he cries, "are there more of you ? Would you hunt me down ? Leave me, I say, leave me. Do you not see that I would be alone with the thought of my boy ? It is his loss that makes me like this, strange and solitary in my ways. It is nothing else—nothing else ; what else should it be indeed ?"

He laughs, as if in scorn of people's idle fancies, waving to her to go—to leave him alone with the night.

Tears stream down Nurse Prettyman's face. Her ruddy cheek is pale, her eyes are dim with weeping.

Why even now as she crossed the hall to come to her master, the feeling of a child's hand clutching at her gown seemed to be with her—she seemed to hear the patter of little feet by her side. Since ever she knew that her darling boy was gone, that never more his strong young arms should hug her close, his laughing lips touch her cheek, sight and hearing have played strange tricks with Nurse Prettyman, and memory has given her back the child she had tended and loved as her own.

She tries to speak through her tears. She would fain set her sorrow beside her master's, fain win him to speak of Ralph, to break the chain that has bound him about since the hour in which they told him that his boy would come home no more.

But Geoffrey has risen to his feet. He crosses the floor, faces her, and with a quick imperious gesture bids her, once and for all, to leave him.

The woman dare not disobey, and, as she steps back, the key grates in the lock of the door which a firm hand has promptly closed.

Geoffrey Stirling is alone at last ; safe too from intrusion of any sort, since he has shut and locked the door between the room he is in and the one that lies three shallow steps below.

Alone—yet more hunted than when most followed.

For his own thoughts, like a pack of ghost-hounds, dog his steps and hang at his heels.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLIV. MR. PROSPER'S TROUBLES.

As Mr. Prosper sank into his armchair after the fatigue of the interview with his lawyer, he reflected that when all was considered Harry Annesley was an ungrateful pig,—it was thus he called him,—and that Miss Thoroughbung had many attractions. Miss Thoroughbung had probably done well to kiss him,—though the enterprise had not been without its peculiar dangers. He often thought of it when alone, and, as distance lent enchantment to the view, he longed to have the experiment repeated. Perhaps she had been right. And it would be a good thing, certainly, to have dear little children of his own. Miss Thoroughbung felt very certain on the subject, and it would be foolish for him to doubt. Then he thought of the difference between a pretty fair-haired little boy, and that ungrateful pig, Harry Annesley. He told himself that he was very fond of children. The girls over at the parsonage would not have said so, but they probably did not know his character.

When Harry had come back with his fellowship, his uncle had for a few weeks been very proud of him,—had declared that he should never be called upon to earn his bread, and had allowed him two hundred and fifty pounds a year to begin with. But no return had been made to this favour. Harry had walked in and out of the Hall as though it had already belonged to him,—as many a father delights to see his eldest son doing. But the uncle in this instance had not taken any delight in seeing it. An uncle is different from a father,—an uncle who has never had a child of his own. He wanted deference,

what he would have called respect; while Harry was at first prepared to give him a familiar affection based on equality,—on an equality in money matters and worldly interests, though I fear that Harry allowed to be seen his own intellectual superiority. Mr. Prosper, though an ignorant man, and by no means clever, was not such a fool as not to see all this. Then had come the persistent refusal to hear the sermons, and Mr. Prosper had sorrowfully declared to himself that his heir was not the young man that he should have been. He did not then think of marrying, nor did he stop the allowance, but he did feel that his heir was not what he should have been. But then the terrible disgrace of that night in London had occurred, and his eyes had been altogether opened by that excellent young man, Mr. Augustus Scarborough; then he began to look about him. Then dim ideas of the charms and immediate wealth of Miss Thoroughbung flitted before his eyes, and he told himself again and again of the prospects and undoubted good birth of Miss Puffie. Miss Puffie had disgraced herself, and therefore he had thrown Buxton Hall at the feet of Miss Thoroughbung.

But now he had heard stories about that "excellent young man, Augustus Scarborough," which had shaken his faith. He had been able to exclaim indignantly that Harry Annesley had told a lie. "A lie!" He had been surprised to find that a young man who had lived so much in the fashionable world as Captain Scarborough had cared nothing for this. And as Miss Thoroughbung became more and more exacting in regard to money, he thought, himself, less and less of the lie. It might be well that Harry should ultimately have the property, though he should never again be taken into favour, and there

should be no further question of the allowance. As Miss Thoroughbung reiterated her demands for the ponies, he began to feel that the acres of Buston would not be disgraced for ever by the telling of that lie. But the sermons remained, and he would never willingly again see his nephew. As he turned all this in his mind, the idea of spending what was left of the winter at Cairo returned to him. He would go to Cairo for the winter, and to the Italian lakes for the spring, and to Switzerland for the summer. Then he might return to Cairo. At the present moment Buston Hall and the neighbourhood of Buntingford had few charms for him. He was afraid that Miss Thoroughbung would not give way about the ponies;—and against the ponies he was resolved.

He was sitting in this state with a map before him, and with the squire's letter upon the map, when Matthew, the butler, opened the door and announced a visitor. As soon as Mr. Barry had gone, he had supported nature by a mutton-chop and a glass of sherry, and the débris were now lying on the side-table. His first idea was to bid Matthew at once remove the glass and the bone, and the unfinished potato, and the crust of bread. To be taken with such remnants by any visitor would be bad, but by this visitor would be dreadful. Lunch should be eaten in the dining-room, where chop bones and dirty glasses would be in their place. But here in his book-room they would be disgraceful. But then as Matthew was hurriedly collecting the two plates and the salt-cellar, his master began to doubt whether this visitor should be received at all. It was no other than Miss Thoroughbung.

Mr. Prosper, in order to excuse his slackness in calling on the lady, had let it be known that he was not quite well, and Miss Thoroughbung had responded to this move by offering her services as nurse to her lover. He had then written to herself that though he had been a little unwell, "suffering from a cold in the chest, to which at this inclement season of the year it was peculiarly liable," he was not in need of anything beyond a little personal attention, and would not trouble her for those services, for the offer of which he was bound to be peculiarly grateful. Thus he had thought to keep Miss Thoroughbung at a distance. But here she was, with those hated ponies at his very door. "Matthew," he said, making a confidant,

in the distress of the moment, of his butler, "I don't think I can see her."

"You must, sir; indeed you must."

"Must?"

"Well; yes; I'm afraid so. Considering all things; the matrimonial prospects and the rest of it, I think you must, sir."

"She hasn't a right to come here, you know,—as yet." It will be understood that Mr. Prosper was considerably discomposed when he spoke with such familiar confidence to his servants. "She needn't come in here, at any rate."

"In the drawing-room, if I might be allowed to suggest, sir."

"Show Miss Thoroughbung into the drawing-room," said he with all his dignity. Then Matthew retired, and the Squire of Buston felt that five minutes might be allowed to collect himself. And the mutton-chop bone need not be removed.

When the five minutes were over, with slow steps he walked across the intervening billiard-room, and slowly opened the drawing-room door. Would she rush into his arms, and kiss him again, as he entered? He sincerely hoped that there would be no such attempt; but if there were, he was sternly resolved to repudiate it. There should be nothing of the kind till she had clearly declared, and had put it under writing by herself and her lawyers, that she would consent to come to Buston without the ponies. But there was no such attempt. "How do you do, Mr. Prosper?" she said in a loud voice, standing up in the middle of the room. "Why don't you ever come and see me? I take it very ill of you; and so does Miss Tickle. There is no one more partial to you than Miss Tickle. We were talking of you only last night over a despatched crab that we had for supper." Did they have despatched crabs for supper every night? thought Mr. Prosper to himself. It was certainly a strong reason against his marriage. "I told her that you had a cold in your head."

"In my chest," said Mr. Prosper meekly.

"'Bother colds,' said Miss Tickle. 'When people are keeping company together they ought to see each other.' Those were Miss Tickle's very words."

That it should be said of him, Mr. Prosper, of Buston, that he was "keeping company" with any woman! He almost resolved, on the spur of the moment, that under no circumstances could he now marry Miss Thoroughbung. But unfor-

fortunately his offer had been made, and the terms of the settlement, as suggested by himself, placed in the hands of his lawyer. If Miss Thoroughbung chose to hold him to his offer, he must marry her. It was not that he feared an action for breach of promise, but that, as a gentleman, it would behove him to be true to his word. He need not, however, marry Miss Tickle. He had offered no terms in respect to Miss Tickle. With great presence of mind, he resolved at once that Miss Tickle should never find a permanent resting-place for her foot at Buston Hall. "I am extremely indebted to Miss Tickle," said he.

"Why haven't you come over just to have a little chat in a friendly way? It's all because of those stupid lawyers, I suppose. What need you and I care for the lawyers? They can do their work without troubling us, except that they will be sure to send in their bills fast enough."

"I have had Mr. Barry, from the firm of Messrs. Grey and Barry, of Lincoln's Inn, with me this morning."

"I know you have. I saw the little man at Soames and Simpson's, and drove out here immediately, after five minutes' conversation. Now, Mr. Prosper, you must let me have those ponies."

That was the very thing which he was determined not to do. The ponies grew in imagination, and became enormous horses capable of consuming any amount of oats. Mr. Prosper was not of a stingy nature, but he had already perceived that his escape, if it were effected, must be made good by means of those ponies. A steady old pair of carriage-horses had been kept by him, and by his father before him, and he was not going to be driven out of the old family ways by a brewer's daughter. And he had, but that morning, instructed his lawyer to stand out against the ponies. He felt that this was the moment for firmness. Now, this instant, he must be staunch, or he would be saddled with this woman,—and with Miss Tickle,—for the whole of his life. She had left him no time for consideration, but had come upon him as soon almost as the words spoken to the lawyer had been out of his mouth. But he would be firm. Miss Thoroughbung opened out instantly about the ponies, and he at once resolved that he would be firm. But was it not very indelicate on her part to come to him and to press him in this manner? He began to hope that she also would be firm about the ponies, and that

in this way the separation might be effected. At the present moment he stood dumb. Silence would not in this case be considered as giving consent. "Now, like a good man, do say that I shall have the ponies," she continued. "I can keep 'em out of my own money, you know, if that's all." He perceived at once that the offer amounted to a certain yielding on her part, but he was no longer anxious that she should give way. "Do'ee now say yes, like a dear old boy." She came closer to him, and took hold of his arm, as though she were going to perform that other ceremony. But he was fully aware of the danger. If there came to be kissing between them it would be impossible for him to go back afterwards, in such a manner but that the blame of the kiss should rest with him. When he should desire to be "off," he could not plead that the kissing had been all her doing. A man in Mr. Prosper's position has difficulties among which he must be very wary. And then the ridicule of the world is so strong a weapon, and is always used on the side of the women! He gave a little start, but he did not at once shake her off. "What's the objection to the ponies, dear?"

"Two pair of horses! It's more than we ought to keep." He should not have said "we." He felt, when it was too late, that he should not have said "we."

"They aren't horses."

"It's the same as far as the stables are concerned."

"But there's room enough, Lord bless you! I've been in to look. I can assure you that Dr. Stubbs says they are required for my health. You ask him else. It's just what I'm up to,—is driving. I've only taken to them lately, and I cannot bring myself to give 'em up. Do'ee, love. You're not going to throw over your own Matilda for a couple of little beasts like that!"

Every word that came out of her mouth was an offence. But he could not tell her so; nor could he reject her on that score. He should have thought beforehand what kind of words might probably come out of her mouth. Was her name Matilda? Of course he knew the fact. Had any one asked him he could have said, with two minutes' consideration, that her name was Matilda. But it had never become familiar to his ears, and now she spoke of it as though he had called her Matilda since their earliest youth. And to be called "Love!" It might be very nice

when he had first called her "Love" a dozen times. But now it sounded extravagant,—and almost indelicate. And he was about to throw her over for a couple of little beasts. He felt that that was his intention, and he blushed because it was so. He was a true gentleman, who would not willingly depart from his word. If he must go on with the ponies he must. But he had never yet yielded about the ponies. He felt now that they were his only hope. But as the difficulties of his position pressed upon him, the sweat stood out upon his brow. She saw it all and understood it all, and deliberately determined to take advantage of his weakness. "I don't think that there is anything else astray between us. We've settled about the jointure;—four hundred a year. It's too little, Soames and Simpson say; but I'm soft and in love, you know." Here she leered at him, and he began to hate her. "You oughtn't to want a third of my income, you know. But you're to be lord and master, and you must have your own way. All that's settled."

"There is Miss Tickle," he said in a voice that was almost cadaverous.

"Miss Tickle is of course to come. You said that from the very first moment when you made the offer."

"Never!"

"Oh, Peter, how can you say so!" He shrank visibly from the sound of his own christian-name. But she determined to persevere. The time must come when she should call him Peter, and why not commence the practice now at once? Lovers always do call each other Peter and Matilda. She wasn't going to stand any nonsense, and if he intended to marry her, and use a large proportion of her fortune, Peter he should be to her. "You did, Peter. You know you told me how much attached you were to her."

"I didn't say anything about her coming with you."

"Oh, Peter, how can you be so cruel? Do you mean to say that you will deprive me of the friend of my youth?"

"At any rate, there shall never be a pony come into my yard." He knew when he made this assertion that he was abandoning his objection to Miss Tickle. She had called him cruel, and his conscience told him that, if he received Miss Thoroughbung and refused admission to Miss Tickle, he would be cruel. Miss Tickle, for aught that he knew, might have been the friend of her youth. At any rate, they had been

constant companions for many years. Therefore, as he had another solid ground on which to stand, he could afford to yield as to Miss Tickle. But as he did so, he remembered that Miss Tickle had accused him of "keeping company," and he declared to himself that it would be impossible to live in the same house with her.

"But Miss Tickle may come," said Miss Thoroughbung. Was the solid ground—the rock, as he believed it to be, of the ponies, about to sink beneath his feet? "Say that Miss Tickle may come. I should be nothing without Miss Tickle. You cannot be so hard-hearted as that."

"I don't see what is the good of talking about Miss Tickle, till we have come to some settlement about the ponies. You say that you must have the ponies. To tell you the truth, Miss Thoroughbung, I don't like any such word as 'must.' And a good many things have occurred to me."

"What kind of things, deary?"

"I think you are inclined to be—gay."

"Me! gay!"

"While I am sober, and perhaps a little grave in my manners of life. I am thinking only of domestic happiness, while your mind is intent upon social circles. I fear that you would look for your bliss abroad."

"In France, or Germany?"

"When I say abroad, I mean out of your own house. There is perhaps some discrepancy of taste of which I ought earlier to have taken cognisance."

"Nothing of the kind," said Miss Thoroughbung. "I am quite content to live at home, and do not want to go abroad, either to France, nor yet to any other English county. I should never ask for anything, unless it be for a single month in London."

Here was a ground upon which he perhaps could make his stand. "Quite impossible," said Mr. Prosper.

"Or for a fortnight," said Miss Thoroughbung.

"I never go up to London except on business."

"But I might go alone, you know,—with Miss Tickle. I shouldn't want to drag you away. I have always been in the habit of having a few weeks in London about the Exhibition time."

"I shouldn't wish to be left by my wife."

"Of course we could manage all that. We're not to settle every little thing beforehand, and put it into the deeds. A precious sum we should have to pay the lawyers."

"It's as well we should understand each other."

"I think it pretty nearly is all settled that has to go into the deeds. I thought I'd just run over after seeing Mr. Barry, and give the final touch. If you'll give way, dear, about Miss Tickle and the ponies, I'll yield in everything else. Nothing surely can be fairer than that."

He knew that he was playing the hypocrite, and he knew also that it did not become him as a gentleman to be false to a woman. He was aware that from minute to minute, and almost from word to word, he was becoming ever more and more averse to this match which he had proposed to himself. And he knew that in honesty he ought to tell her that it was so. It was not honest in him to endeavour to get rid of her by a side blow, as it were. And yet this was the attempt which he had hitherto been making. But how was he to tell her the truth? Even Mr. Barry had not understood the state of his mind. Indeed, his mind had altered since he had seen Mr. Barry. He had heard within the last half-hour many words spoken by Miss Thoroughbung, which proved that she was altogether unfit to be his wife. It was a dreadful misfortune that he should have rushed into such peril; but was he not bound as a gentleman to tell her the truth? "Say that I shall have Jemima Tickle!" The added horrors of the christian-name operated upon him with additional force. Was he to be doomed to have the word Jemima holloaed about his rooms and staircases for the rest of his life? And she had given up the ponies, and was taking her stand upon Miss Tickle, as to whom at last he would be bound to give way. He could see now that he should have demanded her whole income, and have allowed her little or no jointure. That would have been grasping, monstrous, altogether impracticable; but it would not have been ungentlemanlike. This chaffering about little things was altogether at variance with his tastes;—and it would be futile. He must summon courage to tell her that he no longer wished for the match;—but he could not do it on this morning. Then,—for that morning,—some benign god preserved him.

Matthew came into the room and whispered into his ear that a gentleman wished to see him. "What gentleman?" Matthew again whispered that it was his brother-in-law. "Show him in," said Mr. Prosper with a sudden courage. He had

not seen Mr. Annesley since the day of his actual quarrel with Harry. "I shall have the ponies," said Miss Thoroughbung during the moment that was allowed to her.

"We are interrupted now. I am afraid that the rest of this interview must be postponed." It should never be renewed, though he might have to leave the country for ever. Of that he gave himself assurance. Then the parson was shown into the room.

The constrained introduction was very painful to Mr. Prosper, but was not at all disagreeable to the lady. "Mr. Annesley knows me very well. We are quite old friends. Joe is going to marry his eldest girl. I hope Molly is quite well." The rector said that Molly was quite well. When he had come away from home just now he had left Joe at the parsonage. "You'll find him there a deal oftener than at the brewery," said Miss Thoroughbung. "You know what we're going to do, Mr. Annesley. There are no fools like old fools." A thunder-black cloud came across Mr. Prosper's face. That this woman should dare to call him an old fool! "We were discussing a few of our future arrangements. We've arranged everything about money in the most amicable manner, and now there is merely a question of a pair of ponies."

"We need not trouble Mr. Annesley about that, I think."

"And Miss Tickle! I'm sure the rector will agree with me that old friends like me and Miss Tickle ought not to be separated. And it isn't as though there was any dislike between them, because he has already said that he finds Miss Tickle charming."

"Damn Miss Tickle," he said;—whereupon the rector looked astonished, and Miss Thoroughbung jumped a foot from off the ground. "I beg the lady's pardon," said Mr. Prosper piteously, "and yours, Miss Thoroughbung;—and yours, Mr. Annesley." It was as though a new revelation of character had been given. No one, except Matthew, had ever heard the Squire of Buston swear. And with Matthew the cursings had been by no means frequent, and had been addressed generally to some article of his clothing or to some morsel of food prepared with less than the usual care. But now the oath had been directed against a female, and the chosen friend of his betrothed. And it had been uttered in the presence of a clergyman, his brother-in-law, and the

rector of his parish. Mr. Prosper felt that he was disgraced for ever. Could he have overheard them laughing over his ebullition in the rectory drawing-room half an hour afterwards, and almost praising his violence, some part of the pain might have been removed. As it was he felt at the time that he was disgraced for ever.

"We will return to the subject when next we meet," said Miss Thoroughbung.

"I am very sorry that I should so far have forgotten myself," said Mr. Prosper, "but——"

"It does not signify;—not as far as I am concerned;" and she made a little motion to the clergyman, half bow and half curtsy. Mr. Annesley bowed in return, as though declaring that neither did it signify very much as far as he was concerned. Then she left the room, and Matthew handed her into the carriage, when she took the ponies in hand with quite as much composure as though her friend had not been sworn at.

"Upon my word, sir," said Prosper as soon as the door was shut, "I beg your pardon. But I was so moved by certain things which have occurred that I was carried much beyond my usual habits."

"Don't mention it."

"It is peculiarly distressing to me, that I should have been induced to forget myself in the presence of a clergyman of the parish and my brother-in-law. But I must beg you to forget it."

"Oh, certainly. I will tell you now why I have come over."

"I can assure you that such is not my habit," continued Mr. Prosper, who was thinking much more of the unaccustomed oath which he had sworn, than of his brother-in-law's visit, strange as it was. "No one as a rule is more guarded in his expressions than I am. How it should have come to pass that I was so stirred I can hardly tell. But Miss Thoroughbung had said certain words which had moved me very much." She had called him "Peter," and "deary," and had spoken of him as "keeping company" with her. All these disgusting terms of endearment he could not repeat to his brother-in-law; but felt it necessary to allude to them.

"I trust that you may be happy with her, when she is your wife."

"I can't say. I really don't know. It's a very important step to take at my age; and I am not quite sure that I should be doing wisely."

"It's not too late," said Mr. Annesley.

"I don't know. I can't quite say." Then Mr. Prosper drew himself up, remembering that it would not become him to discuss the matter of his marriage with the father of his heir.

"I have come over here," said Mr. Annesley, "to say a few words about Harry." Mr. Prosper again drew himself up. "Of course you're aware that Harry is at present living with us." Here Mr. Prosper bowed. "Of course, in his altered circumstances, it will not do that he shall be idle, and yet he does not like to take a final step without letting you know what it is." Here Mr. Prosper bowed twice. "There is a gentleman of fortune going out to the United States on a mission which will probably occupy him for four or five years. I am not exactly warranted in mentioning his name; but he has taken in hand a political project of much importance." Again Mr. Prosper bowed. "Now, he has offered to Harry the place of private secretary, on condition that Harry will undertake to stay the entire term. He is to have a salary of three hundred a year, and his travelling expenses will of course be paid for him. If he goes, poor boy, he will in all probability remain in his new home and become a citizen of the United States. Under these circumstances, I have thought it best to step up and tell you in a friendly manner what his plans are." Then he had told his tale, and Mr. Prosper again bowed.

The rector had been very crafty. There was no doubt about the wealthy gentleman with the American project, and the salary had been offered. But in other respects there had been some exaggeration. It was well known to the rector that Mr. Prosper regarded America and all her institutions with a religious hatred. An American was to him an ignorant, impudent, foul-mouthed, fraudulent creature, to have any acquaintance with whom was a disgrace. Could he have had his way, he would have reconstituted the United States as British Colonies at a moment's notice. Were he to die without having begotten another heir, Buston must become the property of Harry Annesley; and it would be dreadful to him to think that Buston should be owned by an American citizen. "The salary offered is too good to be abandoned," said Mr. Annesley when he saw the effect which his story had produced.

"Everything is going against me," exclaimed Mr. Prosper.

"Well; I will not talk about that. I did

not come here to discuss Harry or his sins;—nor, for the matter of that, his virtues. But I felt it would be improper to let him go upon his journey without communicating with you." So saying he took his departure, and walked back to the rectory.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

NORTHUMBERLAND. PART I.

AWAY to the north! Whirling through the green fields and broad plough lands, just pausing to take breath at Peterborough, and then once more away through the fat plains of Lincolnshire. Presently we darted over a long low bridge, with a river below running full and turbid between soppy, reedy banks—and beyond, a wide plain, wet and watery, with a sad lowering sky. "Pardon me," at this moment said a quiet pale man, like a professor, who had so far not spoken a word. "Pardon me, but that river is——" "The Trent," responded curtly a commercial-looking passenger opposite. "Ah, then," said the other in an undertone, more to himself than his companion, "we may consider ourselves now in Northumberland." The commercial man wrinkled up his nose in a humorous way. "Pray, may I ask what you consider the boundaries of Northumberland?" "Roughly speaking, the country lying between the Trent and the Forth," replied the pale man with the air of one accustomed to give information. The other laughed a little scornfully. "Then, since you were at school, it appears to have shrunk a good bit."

And no doubt the commercial man was right. Since the days the professor had in his mind—the days of the old English Kingdom of Northumbria, when York was its capital, and Edinburgh a frontier town—since those days indeed Northumberland has shrunk and shrivelled up, and there is still a long journey before us ere we reach the gateway of Northumberland, that new castle on the Tyne, which Robert the Norman built when there were only a few scattered huts on a site where is now one of the commercial capitals of the north.

But in a busy hive like Newcastle the past seems to sink into insignificance before the teeming life of the present. The chronicles that would suit the genius of the place would tell of its Stephensons and Armstrongs, the history of coal and iron and

the progress of mechanics. The shell of the feudal fortress, not hoary so much as grimy, intended to guard the passage of the Tyne, is mocked at by huge bridges where trains roar and clank, while on the banks innumerable chimneys from the iron-works, the glass-works, the potteries, the lead-works, and oil-mills—whatever industry is smoky and smothery in its processes finds here a chosen home—contribute to the lurid gloom that hangs about the city as a garment. Then there are the keels that float up and down with the tide, in long flotillas; with perhaps a fragile racing skiff darting skilfully through the press. In all this we have no trace of ancient Northumberland, the borderland with its gloom of mountain and fell, with its sparkling streams and ancient fortalices, the land of moss-troopers and hardy borderers, of men-at-arms, and archers ever on the watch for the beacon-fires that may tell of raid and invasion.

It is different as we pass along the iron-bound coast, where the sea sweeps roaring in upon the wall of rocks and rises high in spray and foam, where ancient ruins frown from the shapeless rocks, and here and there in some gap in the stern barrier the smoke from a fisher-cottage relieves the sombre desolation of the scene. Here the breeze blows, pure and fresh, from the very sources of the winds. Here the past assumes a distinct importance of its own. Among the little towns, and about the old churches and border towers, the footsteps of time have not been effaced by a crowd of events. Whatever deeds were done here lang syne, little has happened since to disturb their memory. The old names, too, still remain—the names, if nothing else, of the powerful families who have reigned here in almost undisputed sovereignty. The Percys still are lords paramount over hill and dale, and the Greys are counted among the best now as in the days of the Plantagenets.

And yet people hardly visit Northumberland. They stop short of it, reaching only as far as Scarborough, or perhaps at farthest Whitby. Or they pass through it, aiming for Scotland, which is hardly more picturesque, and is certainly without the same historic interest. For who, after Macbeth, cares much about the Scottish kings? and put the Stuarts in the balance with the Percys, and but for crown and royal trappings thrown in, which would kick the beam?

And so, while others rush on, let us make for Bamborough—

King Ida's castle, huge and square—

the mother-town of all the Northumbrian land. Mother-town though it be, its own children hardly know it; in vain you look for it in Bradshaw; but the roadside station of Lucker is about four miles from the village—a village which might be a pleasant, flourishing little watering-place, if its growth were permitted; but which is kept within its present bounds with an Elizabethan severity by those who rule its destinies. Beyond this village in swaddling clothes rises the square keep of the castle, reminding one somewhat in form and emplacement of Dover, the fortifications exciting a little wonder at their size and extent, considering how little there seems to guard. And from Bamborough tower what a grand sweep of sea and land! The sea most attractive perhaps—its bosom speckled with passing sails, the horizon lost in the distant haze, the haze out of which came the long war-ships of the invaders, when first the English came into the land.

And from this point, hand to hand and foot to foot, the fight was carried on, the Britons fighting for home and everything dear to them, while the Saxons fiercely struggled on for dear life, with heroic deeds and fell slaughters, alike unrecorded and forgotten. But for the fair-haired men came constantly fresh ship-loads of warriors from beyond seas, and so, step by step, the English advanced and the Britons retreated, till at last came Ida the flame-bearer—flames for the houses and churches, for the barns and stables, everywhere fire, death, and extermination in this fierce struggle of race against race. Then, by-and-by, the Britons retired sullenly to their fastnesses among the Pennine Hills; while Ida built a home and fort on this impregnable rock to which he gave the name of his wife Bebb, and which was ever after known as Bebbanberg; and from this stronghold the tide of victory ran on till the fierce Northumbrians had carried fire and sword right across the land as far as Chester, where they won a great victory, the sad fame of which still lives in the mournful legends of Wales. And soon after this, under Edwin, the founder of Edinburgh, the Northumbrian kingdom flourished for a while in prosperity. Edwin brought home a wife from the more civilised and settled kingdom of Kent, and in the train of his wife came monks from Canterbury, at the

head of whom was Paulinus, the great missionary of the north. Then, the king once converted, Northumbria became Christian en masse, Paulinus baptising by thousands in the rivers; and we read of a sort of golden age in the rugged north, with fountains by the wayside for the refreshment of weary travellers, and drinking-cups of brass hung up thereby which none cared to steal, anticipating the drinking-fountains of the nineteenth century by more than twelve hundred years.

But soon to all this prosperity there is a terrible check. A great warrior was king of the heathen midland English, and allied with Cadwallon, the doughty British chieftain of the still unconquered kingdom of Strathclyde. They overran all Northumbria, defeating and slaying the proud Edwin in a great battle. Paulinus escaped, with Edwin's queen, reached a ship and sailed away to South England, whence he ventured not forth again, but was made Bishop of Rochester, died, and was buried there. All was not yet lost, however, for Northumbria. A king was found of a rival race, who gathered up the scattered elements of resistance, and in one supreme effort vanquished the Britons and killed their valiant king Cadwallon. The forces of the English were greatly inferior to those of their enemy, and much of the credit of the victory was ascribed to the power of a miraculous cross which the king had erected as his standard. Oswald lost no time in showing his gratitude for the miraculous intervention of the heavenly powers, and sent to the sacred island of Iona begging for some holy man to be sent to instruct his people in the faith; the priests from Canterbury having mostly fled the country with their leader Paulinus.

From Iona Aidan was sent, to found a second Iona on the bleak northern coast. Here from the castle wall the island thus colonised, ever since called Holy, is to be seen; the farthest and largest of the group that lie there like sea-birds floating on the waves. For a time the Christianity of Northumbria became distinctly Scotch or Celtic, differing from the faith introduced by the Roman missionaries in the south on several points of ritual, and on many points of sentiment and practice. Something of Eastern simplicity, an asceticism rather of temperament than of discipline; a love of seclusion and reverie, with a deep sense of community with Nature in her wildest and loneliest scenes; a kind of feminine sympathy with weak-

ness and distress; these are the striking features of the disciples of St. Columba.

In Oswald, the king, the men from Iona found a congenial spirit. Here, at a feast, held, no doubt, within this very enclosure, King Oswald shared his dinner with a wandering beggar, and gave his silver dish as a way-penny; and here the holy Aidan blessed the generous giver. "Never may that right arm perish!" he cried; but, alas! the prayer, if granted at all, was granted only to the ear, for soon after Oswald was slain in battle by the fierce Penda of Mercia. But then the relics of the king were collected, and the generous right arm was enclosed in a shrine within the church of this castle of Bamborough, though this must have been long after, for at the time Penda was ravaging all the country, and had even set siege to Bebbanberg, where chiefs and mighty men of the land had collected for one desperate stand. And from his barren island-home the good Aidan watched the progress of the heathen invader in the smoke of burning houses and churches. But as long as the king's town held out all was not yet lost. And then Penda, it is said, despairing of storming the stockade defended by such brave hearts, collected from far and near the ruins of cottages and halls, timber, thatch, and wattles, which he heaped up in one huge pile against the castle mound. And then, setting it on fire, the black suffocating smoke settled in choking volumes on the devoted town, and drifted out to sea in a huge portentous column. St. Aidan watched it from his cell, and in the bitterness of his heart cried out: "Lord, see what ill this heathen Penda doth." And then we are told that the wind suddenly veered; the great suffocating serpent was slowly swept back and away—away from the walls of the heaven-protected city and back upon the godless heathen, whose loud triumphant cries just now had seemed the death-note of the Northumbrian braves.

From this moment the annals of Bamborough are for a time obscure. The tide of Northumbrian conquest flowed once more, and the successor of the sainted Oswald ruled over a kingdom even more extensive than that indicated by the professor when we crossed the Trent. Lincoln was his, and Carlisle, with ancient York for a capital, and thus Bebbanberg was abandoned as a kingly seat. In the tenth century the Danes spoiled castle and town, but the Norman kings saw the advantage

of the position—giving a landing-place and a hold in a debateable turbulent land—and the present strong and massive keep was built, probably almost simultaneously with the White Tower of London. The castle was held for Robert de Mowbray when in rebellion against Rufus, and the Red King besieged it with all his power, building up against it a huge wooden tower, called appropriately Malvoisin. But the castled rock was like to have proved too strong for him, when Mowbray, who had been fighting elsewhere, was taken prisoner, and, to save his eyes from the hot irons the king had ready for him, ordered the castle to be surrendered. From that time it seems to have been held as a royal castle, and its name—now Baenberg—occurs frequently in the royal accounts of expenses.

Later on the castle formed a temporary refuge for Gaveston, the favourite of Edward the Second; in a subsequent reign the Percys held it for the king; and in the Wars of the Roses it was one of the strong places of the Lancastrian party in the north. When the loss of the battle of Hexham had left the Red Rose helpless in the north, Sir Ralph Grey, one of the leaders of the cause, threw himself into the castle, hoping, perhaps, to hold out till help should come from France. But King Edward assailed him "*cum maximis bombardis*," and the old walls were presently tumbling about the ears of the defenders. Sir Ralph himself was crushed under the ruins of a fallen tower, as the roar of the king's artillery sounded the knell of the great baronage of England and their strong castles. And just as the great bombards of Edward the Fourth left it, so the castle remained, ruined and dismantled, for many centuries. Elizabeth granted it to the Forsters, and Thomas Forster lost it in 1715, for his share in the Jacobite rising. The property was purchased by the then Bishop of Durham, Lord Crewe, a relative of Forster's, who left it at his death to trustees for the purposes of a somewhat original charity, thus described by Captain Grose, who writes: "In the year 1757, the trustees for Lord Crewe's charity began the repairs of Bamborough Tower under the direction of Dr. Sharp, when it was fitted up for the reception of the poor. The upper parts were formed into granaries, whence in times of scarcity corn is sold to the indigent, without any distinction, at four shillings per bushel. A hall and

some apartments are reserved by the doctor, who frequently resides here to see that his noble plan is properly executed.

"Among the distressed who find alleviation by the judicious disposition of this charity, are the mariners navigating this dangerous coast, for whose benefit a constant watch is kept on the top of the tower, from whence signals are given to the fisherman of Holy Island when any ship is discovered in distress. Besides this, in every great storm, two men on horseback patrol the adjacent coast from sunset to sunrise, who in case of any shipwreck are to give immediate notice at the castle. The shipwrecked mariner finds a hospitable reception, and is here maintained for a week or longer, and the bodies of the drowned are decently buried."

Thus it is that the old tower of Bamborough wears such a cheerful habitable look, for with some modifications the charity still continues its useful work. Popular tradition, with some lingering memories of the former greatness of the site, has embellished the castle with a wonderful legend, drawn from the folklore of the race, of a certain loathly worm or serpent which had been thus transformed from a beautiful princess by the spiteful queen and enchantress her step-mother—a worm that drank every day the milk of seven cows, and threatened the ruin of the north countree. The Child of Wynd, the Perseus of the drama, sets out to deliver the country with his companions.

They built a ship without delay
With masts of the rowan-tree.

The queen's magical arts are powerless against the rowan-tree, and the Child lands in safety under Bamborough towers, and, sword in hand, encounters the worm, which speaks him fair, however, in these mysterious words:

Oh, quit thy sword and bend thy bow,
And give me kisses three;
If I am not won ere the sun go down,
Won I shall never be.

The Child overcomes a certain natural antipathy to a personage at once so coming on and forbidding. He gives the worm the kisses demanded, whereupon:

She crept into the hole a worm, but crept out a lady.

As, however, the lady is entirely without apparel, a slight embarrassment ensues, which is ended by the Child throwing his cloak over the lady, and they proceed in company to the castle where the wicked

queen is discomfited, and finally turned into a toad. The uncouth poem finishes:

This fact now Duncan Fraser,
Of Cheviot, sings in rhyme,
Lest Bambroughshire men should forget
Some part of it in time.

If we linger over Bamborough it is because no other place seems so characteristic of old Northumberland; with its stern coastline, the sea with its mingled brightness and gloom, the white sails, the islands with their clouds of sea-fowl. Yonder breed the eider duck, which are known as St. Cuthbert's chicks, and on the beach may be picked up those fossil *Entrochi* that children still call St. Cuthbert's beads, while the tradition is still extant which excited the curiosity of the holy sisterhood in Marmion.

But fair St. Hilda's nuns would learn
If on a rock by Lindisfarne,
St. Cuthbert sits and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name.

For Cuthbert was of the Holy Island there—less familiarly known as Lindisfarne. A shepherd-boy tending his flock upon the hills, he saw St. Aidan in a vision, who sent him to Melrose Priory, then an offshoot of Iona, where he remained fifteen years. Then he was made prior of Lindisfarne, where he earned such a reputation for sanctity, that the Evil One became jealous of his fame, and tried a fall with him in vain. Over hills and fells he loved to wander, preaching to the poor—by nature a dreamer and recluse. The lonely priory on the barren rock was too gay and populous an abode for him, and he retired to a narrow cell on one of the nearer islands known as the House Island—now adorned by two tall lighthouses—where there are still scattered remains of a chapel and a stone coffin in which it is said the saint would take a voyage as in a boat. From his retirement he was called to assume the episcopal staff and ring, as Bishop of Lindisfarne, but, after two years of unsought dignity, he retired once more to his beloved solitude and there died. The posthumous adventures of the saint are more remarkable than the incidents of his secluded life. His relics remained in their original shrine at Lindisfarne for more than a century, when the heathen Northmen made a descent upon the then rich and prosperous monastery. Some of the monks escaped with what they deemed their most precious treasure, the wonder-working relics of their saint. The subsequent adventures of these emigrants, and their settlement at Durham, hardly belong

to the chronicles of Northumberland, but strange to say, after a couple of centuries' absence, the bones of the saint once more revisited their original resting-place. This time it was Norman William who was ravaging the north, and the monks of Durham had fled from the terror of his name, and taken refuge in Lindisfarne. They soon returned, however, finding the Conqueror not ill-disposed to their fraternity, and William stayed his course of fire and rapine before he reached the frontiers of our county, a fact attributed by the religious to the influence of the saint who

Turn'd the Conqueror back again
When with his Norman Bowyer band
He came to waste Northumberland.

On Lindisfarne there are still considerable remains of the ancient priory, not of Cuthbert's time indeed, but of the respectable antiquity of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. The island can be reached at low water by crossing the sands, a fact noticed by Baeda the venerable, in his Ecclesiastical History, which shows anyhow that the coast level has not materially changed in the last thousand years. It is here that Scott in Marmion places the ghastly incident of the nun immured alive for breach of her vows of chastity—an incident possible a few centuries earlier, but hardly in keeping with the manners of the sixteenth century. But the island and its remains are interesting as the Iona of the eastern coast, the especially Holy Island, a storehouse for the bones of early Northumbrian kings, and the first station of missionary enterprise among the heathen of the north. The influence of the early Celtic Church soon waned indeed in the presence of the more powerful organisation of Rome, and it was a monk of Lindisfarne, himself originally a disciple of the Scottish Cult, who was the chief agent in the discomfiture of the men from Iona; a man who shines out distinctly from the dim records of the past, as the agent of civilisation and mundane culture in opposition to the faith of solitude and reverie. Wilfrid, the stirring Bishop of Northumbria, after spending his youth at Lindisfarne, had completed his ecclesiastical training at Rome, and returned to Northumbria determined to bring his native country into the Roman usage. The Scottish monks, it will be remembered, had their own time for the keeping of Easter, and shaved their heads in a crescent shape from ear to ear, instead of in a round patch on the crown, as was and

is the orthodox method. A great synod was held at Whitby to settle these points, when the influence of Wilfrid prevailed, and the king, who presided, declared for the Church of St. Peter, for the orthodox Easter, and the circular tonsure. At that, the Scotch abbot sorrowfully abandoned Lindisfarne and returned to his own country, with such of his followers as adhered to their ancient rites. Many, however, conformed to the Roman usage, the famous Cuthbert among the rest, and good St. Chad, whose fame still lives at Lichfield, and whose name, indeed, is connected with wells and fountains all over the land.

Long after Cuthbert's time, Lindisfarne was the seat of a bishopric, and bishop, abbot, and monks lived together in peace; but when the Danes descended upon the land, they swept away monastery, bishopric, diocese, and all. From that time we hear no more of Lindisfarne, till the monks of Durham, some time before the Conquest, visited the desolate ruins and decided on planting an offshoot of their abbey in the island.

The existing ruins are the remains of the church of this priory, whose history is for the future bound up with that of the present house of Durham. Near the ruins of the priory are the remains of an ancient castle, on a curious conical mound, about which history is silent, except that it was occupied by a small royal garrison during the past century, and was captured and held for a few hours on behalf of the Pretender, in 1715.

Leaving Bamborough and its attendant islands, with all the halo of ruin and antiquity about them, keeping along the coast road to the south, we presently come upon the ruins of Dunstanborough Castle, on a precipitous cliff overlooking the sea, and a sweep of wild rugged coast-line. In stormy weather the sea breaks and dashes into the chasms below, and spurts up in sheets of spray with loud roaring and rumbling. The name would seem to indicate that the site was originally fortified by the sturdy English saint Dunstan, who ruled king and kingdom with a firm hand. But the present building was erected by Thomas of Lancaster, grandson of Henry the Third, who was killed at Boroughbridge by the men of King Edward the Second when on his way to his own strong fortress. Later on the castle was held for the Red Rose, and was stormed and demolished by the Yorkists, and remains

pretty much as Edward the Fourth's artillery left it.

Still following the coast, and crossing the mouth of the Aln, we come to the finest of the trio of sea-coast castles, Warkworth, proud of Percy's name. The ruined keep rises nobly from the cliffs, and all round is a magnificent prospect of sea and land. To the north lies the rich cultivated country to Alnwick; westwards are the banks of the Coquet, graced with copse and grove; to the south is an extensive plain inclining towards the sea, crowded with villages and interspersed with woods, the shore indented by little ports and creeks, the higher grounds scattered over with innumerable hamlets, churches, and other buildings. Warkworth is so intimately connected with the Percys that its history is that of the family, which may be more conveniently told at Alnwick. But it will be remembered that Shakespeare places some of his scenes in Henry the Fourth at Warkworth—that charming scene where Lady Percy threatens:

In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,
An' if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

A short three miles of the river is the hermitage of Warkworth, the most perfect thing of its kind in all England, a little lonely hermitage on the river-bank, where it is easy to believe in the tradition that tells how it was cut out of the solid rock—its chapel, cell, and rude devotional figures—in expiation of unpardoned crime, by the last of the ancient family of Bertram, a family more ancient even than the Percys.

"WAS IT SUCCESS?"

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

"ROSA, I see another invitation upstairs from the Hardings. Let me repeat to you that I do not sanction your going there."

Dr. Macdonald addressed himself to his wife, who sat opposite him at the dinner-table, well-dressed and silent.

She hardly ate at all, but amused herself by crumbling her bread between her thin white fingers.

The six years which had elapsed since their marriage had left the husband colder and more imperious than ever, and had taken away from the wife all that "*beauté du diable*" which she had enjoyed for so short a period. Her cheeks were hollow, and her colour unnaturally high. She did not look up when her husband spoke, nor did she give the slightest sign that she had heard him.

"The Hardings' rooms are so very draughty," suggested Mrs. Carden apologetically. She was at one side of the table, facing Dr. Teggett. She was always apologetic now in the presence of her son-in-law. She looked towards him before venturing a remark, and seemed to shrink a little under his cold glance.

"Whether the rooms are draughty or not is merely a matter of detail," he answered curtly; "the gist of the matter is that Rosa cannot stand these large entertainments, and I do not intend her to try. I suppose," addressing his wife, "you don't wish to be ill again as you were last winter?"

"You wish it," she said, without looking up, and still crumbling her bread. She spoke with the perversity of ill-health, perhaps half hoping to elicit the warm denial he would have given long ago.

His blue eyes gleamed angrily.

"You are at liberty to make any unreasonable remarks you choose," he said; "but considering the matter even on its lowest grounds, your illness would cause me great inconvenience and expense."

Then the servants came back into the room, and dinner proceeded in silence. Dr. Teggett was used to these little bickerings between husband and wife; he was often at the house. Macdonald had grown to tolerate him, and even to be glad of his company when no one else was there. Any society was preferable to being alone with his wife. Ever since he had discovered, within a year of his marriage, that she was developing consumptive tendencies, his feelings towards her had undergone a singular change. He considered that Mrs. Carden had grossly deceived him, and he never looked at his children without a wave of resentment against their mother; for out of five, two only remained to him, and these were delicate, sickly little boys who seemed very unlikely to survive the course of Spartan treatment to which he subjected them.

"Do have the dear children down to please me," begged Mrs. Carden timidly, so soon as the dessert was brought in.

"As I always have them down to please myself," Dr. Macdonald answered grimly, yet intending a joke, "I see no reason why I should not to-night."

He had a crushing way of answering his mother-in-law's remarks which was not encouraging. Conversation did not flourish at the Macdonalds' table. Rosa, beyond an occasional remark to her mother, never

spoke at all, and Dr. Teggett, who at other times was rather garrulous, looked upon his dinner-hour as too important an event to be lightly broken into by desultory talk.

Two small boys of five and three years old now came into the room, and ran at once up to their mother.

"Come over here, sirs," commanded Dr. Macdonald, and the pair reluctantly went and stood between him and Mrs. Carden.

Rosa seemed almost indifferent to their presence, but the grandmother never let them alone a moment, asking them questions as to their toys and games, and passing them figs and nuts, and sips of wine.

To this Macdonald promptly put a stop.

"Thank your grandmother," he said imperatively to the eldest boy, "and tell her I forbid your touching wine now, or at any other time."

The child faltered with the glass at his lips, and put it down untasted; his father's voice seemed to inspire him with nervous terror.

"Well, sir? Say what I tell you."

"Papa forbids your touching wine now, or at any time," gabbled the little boy timorously.

At this his father laughed abruptly, and taking his son by the shoulders gave him a slight push back to his mother.

"I cannot compliment you on your intelligence," he said in the sarcastic tones children dread; "the little wine you have taken seems to have confused your wits already. Give him a dry biscuit, Rosa, and nothing else. I will not have their teeth ruined with sweets."

Mrs. Carden was not more successful with the younger one whom she had taken on her knee. Sure of her indulgence he made a grab across the table, and upset a finger-glass into a dish of preserved ginger.

"Let that child be removed upstairs," commanded his father, and the culprit was carried howling from the room.

"He is getting most unruly," said Dr. Macdonald; "his mother and grandmother do nothing but spoil him. I shall have to give both these young gentlemen a lesson one day which they won't forget."

His eye rested on Granger, the eldest boy, and the child almost slid under the table with fright; no lesson at least was needed to teach him a proper respect for parental authority.

Mrs. Carden chose the finest orange from the dish, and carefully peeled it;

then she put the pieces on to Rosa's plate, and with nods and smiles invited her grandson to partake. Dr. Macdonald condescended to enter into a scientific conversation with his guest, and Rosa leaning back in her chair played abstractedly with her fan. Suddenly the colour flamed up all over her face, and she leaned forward quickly.

Her husband had been laying down the law of anæsthetics, and was just describing with a horrifying minuteness an experiment he had performed that week upon a dog. His son, leaning with his elbows on the table, was listening with an awful fascination, and when Macdonald, in illustration of his point, mentioned how the animal had drawn itself up into knots, the little boy gave a sniggering laugh.

"Granger," cried his mother furiously, "leave the room this instant!"

Dr. Macdonald paused in amazement.

"What has he done?" he asked her.

Anger and disgust were struggling on Rosa's face.

"Leave the room!" she repeated to her son.

The husband frowned.

"Kindly give me a reason for Granger's departure, and I will see that he obeys you."

The boy stood still between the table and the door. He dared not move.

Rosa looked down into her plate and pulled about a bit of grape-stalk. She pressed her shut fan across her mouth to hide its trembling.

"We are all waiting," said Dr. Macdonald with polite irony. "Granger seems likely to take root where he is."

Rosa could not speak, but the tears began to run down her cheeks.

Her husband examined her with cold curiosity.

"Your mother is unwell," he said presently to his son. "She is unable to stand the noise you make. Be off!"

The boy slunk gladly from the room, and so soon as the door was shut his mother broke out passionately:

"I will not have him hear such things; I have told you before I will not have him brutalised. It is too bad; I believe you do it on purpose." And she began to cry.

Macdonald was greatly irritated, and kept silence a few seconds to subdue his temper.

"You are the most unreasonable woman I know," he said coldly. "I wonder you don't say I got up this morning on purpose to make you cry at dinner-time. But

that I believe you are feeling very unwell, I should see no excuse for such conduct. We will come up to coffee in ten minutes' time."

"You see what Rosa is like," said Macdonald when he and his guest were alone. "Unless she has plenty of extraneous excitement she gets into a morbid condition, and either broods or cries, as you saw to-night. I made a great mistake. My domestic life is a miserable failure. The only comfort I get is from my work."

Dr. Teggett found nothing to say. His sympathy was given to Rosa, whose melancholy face had begun during the last few months to impress him painfully.

Macdonald had never before spoken of his private affairs, but to-night something impelled him to speech, if only to shake off the irritation which oppressed him.

"Rosa ought never to have married," he said. "Mrs. Carden behaved most culpably. I have since learned that Rosa's father was consumptive, and both his sisters died of the disease. It is true, as she told me, that he died of fever, but he would probably never have reached middle-age. Oddly enough, about two years ago I came across a man who had attended the M'Kay family for many years when they lived at Portobello. I heard it all from him."

"Poor girl—poor child!" murmured the old man. "I have feared a long time that there was something wrong."

Dr. Macdonald leaned gloomily on the table. He felt that now the subject was broached, he might as well confide the whole of his grievances.

"Rosa is naturally of a morbid, self-questioning disposition, and she does herself great harm by indulging in it. For a time she throws it off by a round of gaiety, until her strength gives way, and in the reaction which follows she is worse than ever. Her mind is narrow and tenacious, and I make out she had a very narrowing education. She liked to believe that all her actions were seen and approved of by a sort of special Providence, and now she torments herself with remorse because she no longer finds comfort in that belief. At least, so I understand her. I have studied her rather closely. At first I endeavoured to give her wider views, but I found it was no use. All women cling to forms and superstitions; they can't face the naked truth; their brain is too poor in quality."

"Ah! ah!" began Dr. Teggett dissentingly, "there are a good many men, too, who won't face the truth as you see it."

"Well, we won't discuss it again," said Macdonald. "You know my views, and we should neither of us ever convince the other. Shall we go upstairs?"

This conversation with Macdonald made a great impression on Dr. Teggett. For a very long time after it he was haunted by Rosa's melancholy face, and often, when rearranging his cabinets and dusting his treasures, he would find himself ruminating over her situation. He began to persuade himself she had never looked happy—not even in the first months of her marriage—perhaps never at all since her childhood. This ingenious hypothesis was based partly on Dr. Macdonald's diagnosis of her character, partly on the apathy for which even her ill-health did not entirely account; but it flourished chiefly on the unforgotten picture of a boisterous laughing girl he had once watched romping over a lawn, and the memory of the passionate kisses she had bestowed on the faded woman who crossed it to fetch her in. Poor Miss Haverson had now been dead three years, and the school was broken up; but Rosa had never cared to revisit it, and never opened her lips on the subject of her early life. The doctor had an odd fancy that perhaps neither he, nor Mrs. Carden, nor any of them, knew the real Rosa—Miss Haverson's Rosa. He remembered the wonderful difference which had struck him, that day so long ago, between the frowning girl who came into the drawing-room at Norwood and the laughing happy one he had seen from the window. Supposing all these years she had, so to speak, been acting a part, because her real tastes and inclinations were so incompatible with her surroundings? Ideas such as these perplexed the doctor very much, and to Mrs. Gibbs he one day hinted some of his doubts. But she gave him very little satisfaction, for she had plenty of problems of her own to perplex her just then. Her beloved Lance, who had been slowly but carefully stepping down the ladder for the last ten years, had just completed the performance with a rush, and kicked the implement over. He had had the indecency to marry a barmaid, and to propose introducing her to his shuddering family.

But what Mrs. Gibbs suffered on this account was small compared to Mrs. Carden's growing anxieties. Rosa had taken a bad cold, waiting for her carriage

after a dance, and for six weeks had never left the house. She was become painfully thin and feverish, and her cough was shattering to listen to. Dr. Teggett shook his head when he heard Mrs. Carden's account.

"She is so weak, and has such sleepless nights; that terrible cough gives her no peace. Dr. Macdonald talks of getting a nurse for her from his 'Home.' I am sure I would willingly sit up, but he won't hear of allowing me."

Dr. Teggett promised to go and see Rosa soon, and he went with a presentiment that he should not often go again on such an errand. The silence of the house increased his depression. The doctor heard no sign of the children, who were generally noisy enough when their father was out. He felt that the house might almost be uninhabited, when he saw coming down the stairs a young woman, carrying a little tray. She looked about twenty-five, and had a fair and confident face, with fair hair that waved back from the parting, and was plaited firmly and smoothly on the nape of her neck. When she reached the landing, where the doctor stood aside to let her pass, she paused for a second and looked at him very collectedly over the jugs and bottles on the tray. Her eyes were grey and far apart, and her nose turned up. She was not pretty, but exceedingly well-complexioned and reposeful-looking. Behind the doctor was a conservatory with open doors. The winter sunshine, striking mellowly through the glass, irradiated in so poetical a manner this young woman in blue, who stood facing it, that the doctor might have imagined her to be some large-limbed Hebe, bearing down the nectar of the gods. I say "might have," for in reality no such idea crossed his prosaic brain. He immediately saw she must be the nurse from the "Home," and he mentally congratulated her on her healthy appearance.

"Shall I take Dr. Teggett up to the mistress?" asked the maid who preceded him.

The young woman in blue transferred her tray to the speaker. "Carry this down," she said, "and be sure you break nothing. Kindly step this way, sir, and I will see if Mrs. Macdonald can receive you." She spoke with gentle authority, like one accustomed to be obeyed. "Please sit down here," she said, opening the door of the big drawing-room.

"How is she?" asked the old man, still standing; he felt drawn to converse with

this pleasant-faced young woman, whose expression said so clearly that she felt capable of managing everyone's affairs very much better than they could do it for themselves.

"She has been better since Sunday; more tranquil; to-day her mother is with her."

The doctor answered the tone, rather than the words.

"Ah, poor woman! she is too anxious herself to be a very desirable companion. You are from Dr. Macdonald's 'Home,' I suppose?"

"Yes," she said, looking at him. "I am Nurse Hamilton. Dr. Macdonald has always befriended me. He is good enough to say he has confidence in me."

"Tell me, my dear," said the old man, laying a finger on her arm. "I fear it is a bad case?"

Miss Hamilton looked at him a second before answering:

"It is a very interesting one," she said softly. She went through the folding doors into the back room to announce his arrival.

Mrs. Carden came out to fetch him in. She looked ill, and her once pretty eyes were spoilt with tears.

"My poor Rosa!" she said; "you will see a great change in her, but don't observe anything. When once the weather breaks I know she will grow strong again."

The blinds in the back room were drawn down, but from the sunshine shut out behind them, a soft yellow light suffused the room. In the air was a faint smell of medicines. Rosa lay on a straight sofa facing the doors. Over the crimson rug which covered her, her thin hands wandered restlessly. It took the doctor several minutes to overcome the shock her appearance caused him.

Nurse Hamilton moved about with firm, quiet steps, rectifying the rather disordered state of the tables and chairs. Rosa, after the first greetings were over, followed her everywhere with her eyes.

"Let me shake up your pillows, please; your head is not high enough; you will bring on your cough again."

Miss Hamilton gently supported Rosa with one arm while she pulled the pillows into the required position. The contrast between the two women was terrible: the one all strength, and confidence, and exuberant health; the other a spectacle to wring the heart. The doctor remembered it months afterwards when circumstances again brought Miss Hamilton under his notice.

"She is such an admirable nurse," said Mrs. Carden when the door was shut and they were alone, "she is always so pleasant and attentive, we should not know what to do without her; should we, dearest?"

Rosa ground her hands into the clothes, and her cheeks burned painfully. She seemed suffering from a miserable irritation.

"Open the door, mamma," she said sharply, "I am stifling."

Her restless eyes met the doctor's, and he started.

"Don't you like your nurse?" he asked injudiciously.

"I detest her!" cried Rosa passionately, tearing at the fringes of her coverlet.

"Oh, my dear! I thought you liked her so much," said Mrs. Carden in surprise.

"You are always thinking things, mamma," said Rosa bitterly. "I suppose you think I am very happy and shall be downstairs in a fortnight?"

She never looked at her mother, who sat beside her, but stared gloomily away at the opposite wall, or down at her ever-working fingers.

"Well—well, we all hope you will be downstairs soon," said Dr. Teggett, patting her knee soothingly.

"You know I shall never be well again," said Rosa; "I know it, and I am very glad. I am only in the way here."

"Rosa!" cried her mother in consternation, "how can you be so unkind to me? What should we do—what would your poor little boys do without you?"

"What good am I to them? They never see me. He has sent them away," she said drearily.

"Poor little dears," said the grandmother, "they made so much noise."

"That is not the truth," cried Rosa; "you know it is because he does not think it healthy for them to be in a house where there is sickness. He will be glad when I am dead. He will choose better next time."

"Oh, Rosa, you are cruel to me," wept her mother.

Rosa was getting painfully excited. She leaned forward and seemed to struggle with the thoughts that oppressed her.

"You have been cruel to me," she said; "you have made my life miserable. Why did you make me marry him? Why did you ever come home at all? I was happy before I knew you."

Mrs. Carden became ashy pale.

"Good God! how can you say such things?" she whispered hoarsely.

Rosa laughed hysterically.

"How can you talk of God?" she cried. "You care as little for God as my husband does, only he is more honest about it. I, too, have lost God now, and health, and youth, and happiness, and everything!"

She fell back exhausted among her pillows; the blood retreated from her face, leaving it a grey white. Her tearless eyes gazed away in vacant despair. Dr. Teggett felt quite unnerved. He was obliged to take a turn round the room. When he sat down again, he blew his nose sonorously. Mrs. Carden did not utter a word. With her grey head bowed over her lap, she seemed to sit stupefied, all sense crushed out of her. An oppressive silence fell over the room, undisturbed but by the monotonous tic-tac of the clock, or the faint closing of a door down below. A lingering sunbeam slid in through a chink of the blind, and touched with its pale gilding the wall and ceiling. Suddenly the stillness was broken by the sound of a carriage driving rapidly up; a knock echoed through the house; Dr. Macdonald's deep voice was heard in the hall.

Rosa started painfully and attempted to smooth her disordered hair.

"Quick, mamma! it is Robert; make me look nice," she murmured hurriedly.

Dr. Teggett rose. The scene had been inexpressibly painful to him; he wanted to get away to recover his composure.

"I will say good-bye for the present, my dear," he said, taking her hand.

Dr. Macdonald's quick step was heard coming up the stairs; then it stopped half-way. Through the open door his voice was distinctly audible.

"Ah, Miss Hamilton, there you are! I hope you have done as I told you about lying down? I have brought you some flowers to remind you that spring is coming. Shut in here, you are in danger of forgetting all about it."

The nurse's clear voice responded:

"How good of you! What a delicious scent! I love it more than any other."

The watchers in the sick-room heard them come up the last flight together, and stop again outside the drawing-room door. They heard Dr. Macdonald ask her: "Do you know why I brought you primroses? It is because——" But the rest was spoken too low to catch. Miss Hamilton gave her fresh subdued laugh.

"You are always so good to me," she answered.

Dr. Teggett felt Rosa's fingers tighten convulsively on his own.

"I hate her," she murmured, "and that is why."

Then her grasp relaxed, and as her husband and Nurse Hamilton entered the room, she turned her face to her pillows and seemed to sleep.

Dr. Taggett slipped away through the folding doors unobserved. He was not equal to meeting anyone just then; the staircase was full of the fragrance of primroses, but he did not notice it; he got out into the street, and walked at first a little hap-hazard; his eyes were too dim to see the way.

"Poor child! poor child!" he said to himself; "at least it will soon be over!"

And a few late primroses were still being hawked about the streets when the old man learned that Rosa Macdonald was dead.

SOME CURIOUS COMMISSIONS.

THE politic marriage of the victor of Bosworth with Elizabeth of York was as unfelicitous as most politic marriages, and when death dissolved it, there was little grief in the survivor's heart. After three years widowhood Henry had a mind to marry again, and was recommended by Isabella of Spain to seek the hand of the young Queen of Naples. He asked her to send him a portrait of the lady, as, if she were not handsome, he would not have her for all the treasures of the world, the English people "thought so much of good looks." No portrait coming from Spain, Henry despatched James Braybrooke, John Still, and Francis Marsyn to Valencia, ostensibly to deliver Princess Katherine's greetings to her dear kinswoman, but really to learn if the Queen of Naples were fitted to share his throne.

Never, surely, did three gentlemen accept a more thankless commission than that undertaken by the bearers of Henry's most curious and exquisite instructions, as Bacon terms them. These instructions required the envoys to note and set down the young widow's age, the colour of her hair, the hue of her complexion, the quality of her skin; whether her face was fat or lean, round or sharp, painted or unpainted; her countenance cheerful or melancholy, steadfast or "blushing in communication;" the height and breadth of her forehead, the shape of her nose, the peculiarities of her eyebrows, eyes, teeth, and lips were to be precisely noted, with an express injunction to speak to her fasting, and so find out

whether her breath was sweet or not, or savoured of spices, rose-water, or musk. They were enjoined to mark well her highness's neck and bosom; the size and shape of her arms, hands, and fingers, and ascertain her exact height. Lest they might be deceived into giving her more inches than belonged to her, they were directed to obtain a pair of the royal slippers and take careful measurement thereof. Henry's inquisitiveness did not end here. He insisted upon knowing if his possible consort was free from all bodily blemish, unplagued by hereditary ailments, was sometimes ill and sometimes well, or enjoyed constant health; whether she ate or drank immoderately; and generally how she stood with her uncle, the King of Aragon; what land or livelihood she had, or would have, in Naples or elsewhere; and whether such was hers for life only, or went to her heirs for ever.

By dint of close observation, and a little bribery, the envoys-extraordinary were enabled to satisfy their master's curiosity on most points. They reported that the young queen was round in figure, of middle stature, had a fat round face (unpainted), a cheerful countenance, fair complexion, clear skin, greyish-brown eyes, brown hair, and small eyebrows. Her nose rose a little in the midward and bowed a little towards the end, her lips were round and thick, her neck was full and comely; round arms of proper length; hands right fair and soft, with fingers of meet length and breadth, completed the catalogue of her conditions. Regarding her highness's exact height, the dimensions of her forehead, and the sweetness of her breath, the inquisitors remained in doubt; but the Court apothecary assured them that his mistress had no personal deformity; was a good feeder, eating heartily twice a day, but drinking little—water or cinnamon-water being her usual beverage, although sometimes she indulged in a little hypocras. Trustworthy information respecting the queen's pecuniary position was not forthcoming. She was high in favour with the old King of Aragon—possibly because she resembled him in the fashion of her nose and complexion—and he intended to give her a richer dowry than he had given any of his daughters, and report was rife in the land that she was destined to become Queen of England. The chance was given her, but she declined the honour, an example followed by the Archduchess of Savoy. Then Henry made overtures to

the widow of Philip of Castille, but she declared she could not entertain a matrimonial offer until her husband had been laid in his grave; and disinclined to wait until Joan grew tired of carrying her dead Philip about with her, the thrice-rebuffed widower went no more a-wooing.

In 1655, the Earl of Sandwich, having done his part in disposing of the Dutch fleet, off Harwich, hurried home, intent upon disposing of his eldest daughter. Consulting Mr. Pepys on the matter, he commissioned the prince of diarists to bring about a marriage between the Lady Jemimah and the heir of Sir George Cartaret. In two days' time, Pepys had obtained the formal consent of Sir George and his wife, and ere ten days had gone, arranged the articles of alliance, and heard the match mightily approved by the king and the Duke of York.

Here, it might be thought, his commission ended. That was not Pepys's notion. He had wooed and won his own wife in the old, old way, and was not inclined to allow his patron's daughter to be cheated of her courting dues, which seemed likely to be the case if over-modest Philip Cartaret were left to his own devices; so, when that gentleman was bound for Dagenham, to make the acquaintance of his bride-elect, Pepys volunteered his companionship, which was gladly accepted. Had it been declined, the match might have fallen through, for young Cartaret came out badly as a suitor, taking no notice of Lady Jemimah, either at or after supper, and although he professed to be mightily pleased with the lady, acknowledged that much "in the dullest insipid manner that ever man did."

Next day being Sunday, it was arranged that the young people should go to church together, and Pepys spent two hours in instructing Mr. Philip how to behave, telling him to take the lady always by the hand to lead her, and, when alone with her, to make such and such compliments. But his pupil was too bashful to obey orders, and omitted taking Lady Jem's hand, both going to and coming from church, for which his mentor took him roundly to task. Dinner over, everybody adjourned to the gallery, and after chatting awhile, Lady Wright and Pepys slipped away, an example followed by Lord and Lady Crewe, the lovers being left alone, save for the pretty little daughter of Lady Wright, and she, says Pepys, "most innocently came out afterwards, and shut the door to, as if she

had done it, poor child, by inspiration, which made us without have good sport to laugh at it."

Before leaving Dagenham, Pepys took Lady Jem aside, and enquired how she liked the gentleman, or if she was under any difficulty concerning him. She blushed and hid her face; but the questioner was not to be denied, and at last she confessed her readiness to obey her father and mother, "which was all she could say or I expect." On the other side, he was gratified by Philip Cartaret thanking him heartily for his care and pains, and declaring himself mightily pleased with his matrimonial prospects; but, for all that, his adviser had reason to complain that he found him almost as backward in his caresses as he was on the first day.

On the 31st of July, just five weeks after Pepys opened negotiations, Mr. Philip Cartaret and Lady Jemimah Montagu were married at Dagenham, Pepys being somewhat troubled by the bride's sad looks, but comforting himself with the hope it was only her gravity in a little greater degree than usual.

Commissioned by her lord to obtain some bone-lace for presentation to the Queen of France, Dorothy, Countess of Leicester—being resolved, for the honour of the country and her own credit to send none but the best—was under the necessity of informing her husband that the money he proposed to spend would not suffice, bone-laces, if good, being dear. Leicester was evidently as ignorant as most men of the cost of feminine finery. This could not be said of Lord Stair, Queen Anne's able representative at Paris. Writing to thank him for performing so well in her small affairs, Marlborough's duchess says she never had anything in her life so easy and well-made as "the pair of bodyes" he had procured her, and therefore troubled him to get another pair of plain white tabby for her own wear, and a little pair, bound with gold braid on the front, for her daughter, Lady Harriett. Furthermore, she wants a nightgown for herself and a "monto" and petticoat for Lady Harriett, taking leave to set forth very exactly what she would have. "My nightgown need have no petticoat to it, being only of that sort to be easy and warm, with a light silk wadd in it, such as are used to come out of bed and gird round, without any train at all, but very full. 'Tis no matter what colour, except pink or yellow—no gold nor silver in it, but some

pretty striped satin or damask, lined with a taffetty of the same colour. Lady Harriett's is to be a monto and petticoat to go abroad in, but I would not have any gold or silver in it, nor a stuff that is dear, but a middling one that may be worn either in winter or summer. You have seen her, I believe, but 'tis not amiss to say she is above thirteen years old, that they may the better guess at the length of the monto; and if they are as exact as the taylor was in the bodyes, it will not want the least alteration." Like her famous husband, Duchess Sarah had an eye to saving, intimating that she is in no hurry for the things, but would have them up on any occasion, "that one need not be troubled with the Custom House people."

If an ambassador was plagued in this way, an ambassador's wife could not hope to escape similar inflictions. When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was in Turkey, every lady of her acquaintance in London and Vienna pestered her for pots of Balm of Mecca; a cosmetic not so easily obtained as they supposed, nor of much use when it was obtained, if Lady Mary's own experience went for anything. Having applied some to her face one night, she found it next morning swelled to an extraordinary size, "and all over as red as my Lady H.'s;" in which sad state it remained for three days, her looking-glass affording her no consolation for the reproaches of her husband. Some of the demands upon her good-nature afforded the lively lady food for laughter. To one of her many exacting friends she wrote: "You desire me to buy you a Greek slave, who is to be mistress of a thousand good qualities. The Greeks are subjects and not slaves. Those who are to be bought in that manner, are either such as are taken in war, or stolen by the Tartars from Russia, Circassia, or Georgia, and are such miserable, awkward, poor wretches, you would not think any of them worthy to be your housemaids. The fine slaves that wait upon the great ladies, or serve the pleasures of the great men, are all bought at the age of eight or nine years old, and educated with great care to accomplish them in singing, dancing, embroidery, etc.; and their patron never sells them, except as a punishment for some very great fault. If ever they grow weary of them, they either present them to a friend, or give them their freedom. Those that are exposed to sale at the markets, are always either guilty of some crime, or so worthless that they are of no use at all."

Unable to satisfy her friend's longing for a Greek slave, Lady Mary made some amends for the disappointment by executing another commission from her—sending her a Turkish love-letter, in the shape of a small box containing a pearl, a clove, a jonquil, a piece of paper, a pear, a cake of soap, a bit of coal, a rose, a straw, a piece of cloth, some cinnamon, a match, a gold thread, hair, a grape, a piece of gold wire, and a pod of pepper. Taken out of the box in the above order, these articles signified: "Fairest of the young, you are as slender as this clove; you are an unblown rose. I have long loved you, and you have not known it. Have pity on my passion; I faint every hour. Give me some hope; I am sick with love. May I die, and all my years be yours. May you be pleased, and your sorrow mine. Suffer me to be your slave. Your price is not to be found. But my fortune is yours; I burn, I burn; my flame consumes me. Do not turn away your face. Crown of my head; my eyes; I die, come quickly!" The pepper-pod standing for the postscript: "Send me an answer."

If she had good reason to exclaim at the unreasonable requirements of her correspondents, Lady Mary was equally capable of desiring strange things for herself, owing to having commissioned somebody to get her a mummy, "which I hope," says she, "will come safe to my hands, notwithstanding the misfortune that befel a very fine one designed for the King of Sweden. He gave a great price for it, and the Turks took it into their heads that he must have some considerable projects depending upon it. They fancied it was the body of God knows who, and that the state of their empire mystically depended on the conservation of it. Some old prophecies were remembered upon this occasion, and the mummy was committed prisoner to the Seven Towers, where it has remained under close confinement ever since. I dare not try my interest on so considerable a point as the release of it; but I hope mine will pass without examination."

Asked by a friend to find him a footman, an obliging man of letters sent on his own servant with the following comical letter of recommendation: "I think the bearer will fit you. I know he can run well, for he hath run away twice from me, but he knew the way back again. Yet, though he hath a running head as well as running heels—and who will expect a footman to be a stayed man?—I would not part with him

were I not to go post to the North. There be some things in him that answer for his waggeries. He will come when you call him; go when you bid him; and shut the door after him. He is faithful and stout, and a lover of his master. He is a great enemy to all dogs, if they bark at him in his running, for I have seen him confront a huge mastiff and knock him down. When you go a country journey, or have him run with you a-hunting, you must spirit him with liquor. If he be not for your turn, turn him over to me again when I come back." Howel had a knack of giving odd descriptions of people. Desired by Master Thomas Adams to look up a newly-married couple in whom he was interested, Howel did so, and reported that he never before beheld such a disparity between two that were one flesh; comparing the husband to a cloth of tissue doubled, cut upon coarse canvas; and the wife to a buckram petticoat lined with satin. "A blind man," continued he, "is fittest to hear her sing; one would take delight to see her dance if masked; and it would please you to discourse with her in the dark, if your imagination could forbear to run upon her face. When you marry I wish you such an inside of a wife, but from such an outward phisnomy the Lord deliver you!"

When Lafayette paid a visit to the United States, he intimated his desire to become master of an opossum, and a Baltimore editor gladly undertook to see that the general had one to take home with him. Anxious to make the most of the occasion, he proclaimed his want in a highly-spiced appeal to his countrymen, urging them to prove that republics were not always ungrateful. They responded cheerfully—too cheerfully—to the appeal. Opossums came in from north and south, east and west, until the overwhelmed journalist found himself possessed of two thousand one hundred and ninety-nine too many. He could not afford them separate accommodation, he dared not lodge them together; so, at night, he turned them all loose in Monument Square to quarter themselves as they listed. Next day, 'possums were here, there, and everywhere in Baltimore, to the delight of the black, and the disgust of the white citizens, who fervently wished that Lafayette had never heard of an opossum, or that the editor had executed his commission with more discretion. It is possible, however, to be too discreet. Certain

Cincinnati capitalists, interested in a railway Bill passing through the Kentucky Legislature, despatched an honest man to Frankfort with twenty thousand dollars, to be used "where it would do most good." He stayed there until the Bill was introduced and thrown out, when he returned to Cincinnati to report the result of his mission to his employers. "Did you distribute the whole of the money?" asked they. "Not a cent," was the reply; "the members were willing enough to take it, but they wouldn't give receipts, and I was not coming back without either money or vouchers for it." And the would-be log-rollers no longer wondered at the non-passing of their Bill.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II.

CHAPTER X. DEATH'S COUNTERFEIT.

To Geoffrey Stirling, the loss of his beloved son—of Ralph, the one passionately worshipped idol of his heart and life, was not only an immeasurable sorrow—it was a sorrow with a sting in it.

What cries the voice of conscience—that voice so long stifled—in the stillness of that still chamber, where a tortured man paces to and fro, with bent head and furrowed brow, with pain-struck eyes cast down, with working hands clasped in each other behind his back?

"You have played for colossal stakes; you have played a desperate game; you have lived a lie; you have counted the whiteness of your own soul, the cleanness of your own hands as dross; you have basked in the smiles of the false jade called Fortune, fancying yourself her spoiled darling; and now you are ruined, beggared, bankrupt, even in the very hour of your success. The heir was coming to enter upon his kingdom; you were preparing to sun yourself in the light of his prosperity; to revel in your pride in him, to rejoice—for so you hoped it might one day be—in his happiness, wedded to one your keen and wary eyes had singled out for him. Your heart yearned for him; your longings stretched forth like mighty arms to touch him across the sea; your love went out to meet him like a trusty and loving messenger; and now—where are your dreams? There is not a withered leaf buried beneath the snow of this winter's night more dead than your dead hopes."

A hanging lamp lights the room in which Geoffrey Stirling is thus chewing the bitter cud of retrospection. Its soft glow falls full upon the picture of the dying miser.

A moment Squire Stirling stops opposite to it. He shades his eyes with his hand, as if to concentrate the whole force of his sight upon the scene so vividly portrayed.

How skilfully has the painter's hand limned the relaxing muscles of the fingers that clutch the air! How pitifully helpless is the malign mowing of the convulsed lips! How maddeningly mocking is the gleam in the dark eyes of the woman!

Geoffrey Stirling shakes his clenched hand at that daring, beautiful, evil face.

"It is Fate that has played the traitor to me—Fate who has wrested my treasure from me."

He speaks loudly in the exaltation of the moment; then his voice breaks and falls as he moves away, sadly muttering:

"I only wanted my wealth to treasure for my darling's sake—only for him—only for him! I did not want to take it with me, to hoard or hold it. I wanted to make Ralph happy—honoured—great. What are my riches to me now? Dross—dross—dross!"

He swerved a little as he uttered the last word with sad insistence, sweeping his hand across his eyes, as if to clear his vision of some gathering mist.

Then he huddled in his chair, stirring the logs, cowering over the blaze.

"I am cold," he said, "very, very cold, with a chill no fire can warm. I have been like that often of late. It is nothing—nothing. Turtle smiled when I told him. 'You grow fanciful,' he said. That's it—I'm fanciful. No wonder, either. I've led a life to wear the strongest nerves—been wary over it, too, that have I."

Here a gleam of crafty cunning narrowed the eyes that watched the blaze, and Geoffrey Stirling's long strong hands began to pass slowly up and down the slender shanks of his attenuated form. He had clung tenaciously to the fashion of a bygone time, and now, his evening dress of close-fitting black hose, meeting breeches of equally sombre hue, showed the slenderness of his limbs to the full.

"There's nothing the matter with me except that I have lost flesh of late—most men do about my time of life—and now and again I have a coldness about my legs; they grow numb, but it soon passes off. It is not worth thinking about."

The spirit of restlessness was coming upon him once more.

Cruel truths, momentarily forgotten in the wanderings of an overstrained brain, began to show their ghoul-like faces peering into his.

Years back, at a terrible epoch in his own life, he had counted the sorrows and sufferings of others as but slight things. Now, sights and sounds, ghastly wraiths from a dead past, come crowding about him as he sat. A pair of mad eyes, full of sombre fire, glare at him from the shadow of a slouched hat—glare at him, close, to his own—through the diamond-panes of a casement that, wrenched violently back upon its stanchion, lets in the sobbing of a river against the side of a little white boat, and then—twelve deep-toned notes from St. Mary's tower vibrate on the air.

Who is this woman, too, with dark, grandly-outlined face bent above a heap of something soft and white upon her lap? Surely she sews a shroud? Someone lies dead in the next room—someone for whom that last garment is being fashioned.

"No, no," mutters Geoffrey Stirling as this strange phantasy passes across his mental vision; "I will not see him. I have been ill."

Rising from his chair, he once more paces to and fro like some wild creature in its den.

They will not crowd about him so if he keeps moving, these unmannerly phantoms who thrust themselves upon his notice.

Has he not scourged them from him all these years with the thong of his own passionate resolve, and now—are they about to defy the lash?

What is this new spirit of the craven that is gathering about his heart? Why does he long to be alone? Why is the solitude of that silent chamber so welcome to him?

Is it that the crime of ten years ago has taken a new semblance—a sinister and unfamiliar aspect that makes it seem as fresh-spilt blood, instead of as blood that has long since soaked into the earth and lost its crimson dye?

He must—he will evade these serried ranks of haunting intangible beings.

But they will not be set aside.

Here they come, seeming to pursue him as he turns. There is a worn wan face framed in the piteous widow's cap: children cling to a rusty black gown. Little Jake, the cobbler, has one child

by the hand, and is trying to lead him on ; but the boy strains back to his mother, and his eyes never leave her face.

Then comes a portly figure, whip in hand ; and Farmer Dale's face, robbed of its wonted bloom, looks gravely and sadly at Geoffrey Stirling.

Who was it said that the farmer's eldest lad had to give up a certain ambitious scheme of "schooling" because the bank was robbed, and all the hard-earned savings gone ?

And what about Squire Ashby ? How the old man blusters, vows he will have Gaylad shot, "Aye, and the thief, too, if law can do it, by Gad !"

A woman with a gentle troubled face stands by the old squire ; she has her hand upon his shoulder, and her sad questioning eyes are turned upon Cuthbert Deane, whose out-looking fearless glance seems to strike like a spear to Geoffrey's heart, and is a hard thing to meet.

Somewhere Ralph is sitting among the shadows on the stairs. A little yellow pup nestles on his lap, and the boy's hand passes softly over and over the round sleek head.

Geoffrey has to pass the couple as he goes upstairs, and the boy looks up and smiles.

The pain of this last memory is too keen.

The thong of passionate resolve is set to scourge the ghostly visions off, but for once the lash fails to strike them.

On, on they come, drifting him at their pleasure.

Geoffrey Stirling is standing by a table where lies an old leather-bound book with heavy silver clasps.

There is a faint click, and the volume lies open.

A moment's hesitation, and with nervous hasty fingers the leaves are turned, ruffled, fall apart.

There it is—the record of his boy's birth—and lower down a little patch of something that had once been of softest saffron hue, but that now is brown and faded—the withered primrose of a spring as dead long since as itself—a flower that Ralph, a tottering wee thing of three summers, had brought to his father as a first love-gift.

At sight of this memento Geoffrey Stirling's sorrow breaks forth afresh.

He raises the filmy fragile thing a moment in his hand, then lays it reverently down, bending to read the inscription above it :

"Ralph. Born February 14th, 1831."

"He was my valentine, sent straight

from heaven. He came to gladden my heart with the first snowdrops of the year ; my boy—my boy !"

He is kneeling now beside the open book ; his eyes stare eagerly at the words of which the ink is now fading almost to the tint of the dead primrose.

For the nonce sorrow has hidden sin. The troop of sad reproachful figures that have filed before his mind's eye, a weary procession of pain, have all given place to this one tender gentle presence.

The hard-lined, clear-cut features of the man work ; the thin, set lips relax and quiver ; the strained eyes soften, glisten, swim, and with a strangled sob Geoffrey Stirling lays his head down on the arms outstretched across the old Bible, and breaks into bitter weeping.

As the cry of Rachel weeping for her children because they "were not," so the cry of this desolate-hearted man went up to God, breaking upon the quiet of the quiet night.

Gaylad, with a low whine, crawled to the side of his master, and shivered in his sleek skin as though the cold of the night outside were chilling his veins.

The silence, rent by the pitiful sound of a man's sobbing, was now stirred also by the soft turning of the handle of the door, and Gaylad's whine became a growl, while Geoffrey Stirling, raising his tear-stained face from the shelter of his arms, started to his feet.

As he did so the leaves of the Bible were swayed and fluttered by his hand ; and, when stealthy footsteps in the corridor told that the would-be intruder had withdrawn despairing, he looked down upon the open book, to see not the record of his lost darling's birth, but words that seemed to stand out in startling relief from their surroundings—words that his strained and exalted condition caused him to regard in the light of a dart aimed direct at himself from heaven : "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee."

"No, no," he mutters, shrinking back from the page wherein that dread fiat is set forth ; "my time is not yet ; I am hale and hearty, in the prime of my life. There is nothing wrong with me—only a little coldness now and then, a strange swimming in my head ; but they pass—they pass."

Yet even as he speaks, that strange giddiness seizes him, and he staggers to his chair to sit there all a-shake, with trembling hands, and chill dank sweat glistening on his pallid brow.

"I have lost all," he moans, "all—the chalice is emptied, save of the bitter dregs. The load I carry bears me down. It has grown heavy all at once—since Ralph died, and those who spy upon me will see how I bend and groan beneath it."

A while he sits silent, gazing at the fire, now and again stretching his hands to the flame, or rubbing them absently the one on the other as though he would fain stir their sluggish blood to brisker movement.

How still the night is!

The last hour of the old year is waning. Eleven has long since chimed from St. Mary's tower. The cold is intense, and branches creak and cry; but there is no wind, and an exquisite purple dome, star-pied, spans the white world.

Cuthbert Deane's choir, having taken it terribly to heart that Christmas Eve had been hopeless as to weather (viewed in reference to the singing of carols under the windows of people who were considered worthy of such delectable entertainment), had determined to make the best of matters, and, by wishing everyone a happy new year, and singing the carols so carefully practised for many weeks back, combine the due and proper keeping of two festivals.

It is close on midnight when they gather, a company of closely-muffled figures, on the lawn at Dale End.

Gaylad has caught the rustle of their footsteps on the crisp snow, pricks up his long silky ears, and ceases for the moment to watch his master.

That master himself hears nothing. He lies back listlessly in the glimmer of the fire, slowly recovering from the ague-chill that had seized him.

"I am strong, strong," he mutters, and smiles as one who looks down upon past folly from a height of wisdom.

He bares his lank and muscular wrist, closing and unclosing the long, delicately formed, yet powerful hand.

Yes, he is strong indeed. How else could he have borne that burden of which he spoke but now—letting no man see, even by one uncertain wavering step, that he carried a load all through the long, long years!

As this thought passes through his mind he smiles again; but, even in smiling, starts and turns a little sideways in his chair with his face towards the curtained window.

For a single voice, sweet and clear,

comes out of the night, making it beautiful with the story of the Saviour's love to man.

Child Jesu lay on Mary's knee,
And opened wide were his sad eyes;
"Oh, sleep, my little king," said she,
"Oh, sleep—the stars are in the skies."
Then round about that wondrous pair
Angelic voices filled the air.

"We sing the story of the Saviour's birth,
Peace and good-will to all on earth,
Peace for the weary and the worn,
Since Christ is born."

The last four lines are sung in chorus, and Geoffrey Stirling's hand rises and falls to the rhythm of the melody.

At first, nothing but the sweetness of the harmonised voices hits his fancy—he is an ardent lover of music, and the carol is quaint and full of harmony—but, as the chorus dies away, its promise of a peace divine and perfect, of a rest for those who are weary and heavy-laden, comes home to him. In his deep eyes dawns a wistful yearning. Success he has had, honour, greatness, the love of those about him; all these good things have been his.

But peace—when has that fair white messenger from heaven nestled in his heart and lain in his bosom?

Rest? Has he ever known it in its full and perfect sense, since a sin was sinned, and a life burdened with a terrible mystery?

Again the one sweet voice carols of that fair glad night in Bethlehem:

Child Jesu's eyes were closed in sleep,
And as He slept His Mother mild
Did bend her head and watching keep,
With tears—above the heavenly child—
And still around the wondrous pair,
Angelic voices filled the air:

"We sing the story of the Saviour's birth,
Peace and good-will to all on earth,
Pardon to sin's repentant sigh—
Since Christ shall die."

This time, as the chorus ends, comes the sound of hushed voices—one in remonstrance (or so it seemed), several all at once, and eager, yet awed.

Then once more many feet crush the crisp snow.

Davey has dismissed the singers, telling them that the squire is ill—in sorrow—not to be disturbed.

It was, take it altogether, a bitter disappointment. Which of the singers did not wish to shine in the eyes of Squire Stirling? Had they not gallantly faced the possibility of meeting the Dale End ghost, to give him late, yet hearty Christmas greeting? Thus they reasoned among themselves, hastening their steps across haunted ground

since no good was to come of lingering there.

Meanwhile, a strange message has their interrupted song borne to Geoffrey Stirling.

Peace and pardon—these were then the priceless boons Christ gave to men—and yet, were not both set far from him?

Reach out as he might, he could not touch them.

Once more he paces the floor in restless wanderings—once more the phantom brood gathers about him.

Surely, that pictured face beneath the slouched hat looks at him with the eyes of Gabriel Devenant!

Here, too, comes another ghost from the limbos of the past.

It is that of a man who loved and trusted him, who, cold and hard to all the world beside, for him alone was tender; the man whose upright soul withered under the blight of dishonour; the man who died with Ralph's name upon his lips.

Heavily labours the heart of the haunted man, whose fancy plays him such strange tricks to-night.

A wild light begins to burn in his sunken eyes; in his ear rings the burden of the carol singers' story:

Pardon to man's repentant sigh,
Since Christ shall die—

"I do repent," he says, glancing from this side to that like a hunted criminal; "I did not do it for myself; I did it for Ralph. Only give me time—give me length of years, and I will make reparation. I will—I will—I will keep nothing back. I swear I do repent! Oh, my God! give me pardon and peace. I have been no coward; I have borne the burden of my secret long and well. It was easy to bear while there was Ralph to bear it for; but now, only give me time, and I will expiate—I will redeem the past!"

Thicker and thicker the phantoms come about him; they gibber in his ears, goad him to madness with their sad reproachful looks.

He ceases that weary pacing up and down. He must, for the chill and the ague are curdling round his heart again. He

clutches the narrow oaken ledge of the mantelshelf, steadying himself by it.

A frenzy of mingled fear and resolve is upon him.

"It is nothing," he stammers, wildly staring at the image in the high mirror that stares back with wide dull eyes; "it is a fancy—it will pass. 'This night,' the book said, 'this night.' No, no; give me time! I will confess—I will confess."

The words are panted out, as his eyes grow more and more to the image in the glass.

What does he see there?

The horrible Doppelgänger of himself—the presentment of death in his own person.

He sees the leaden-grey colour steal over cheek and brow; sees the palsied trembling of the head. The starting eyes strain and stare, until that ghastly shadow of himself is veiled for ever from his sight by the failure of thought and consciousness in his own brain.

In vain the cold fingers clutch the narrow shelf, in vain he tries to rally sense and strength. He is alone in his extremity, and that by his own act and deed.

There is a terrible hoarse cry, and Geoffrey Stirling lies a huddled-up heap upon the rug, while Gaylad, lifting his tawny muzzle, keens piteously over his master.

The clamour of many voices, and the hurry of many feet, come nearer and nearer. Someone tries and shakes the latch of the doors that lead into the garden.

There is the crash of glass, the strain and splintering of wood, and Davey, closely followed by Cuthbert Deane, are in the room.

With a cry, scarcely less heartrending than that uttered a moment ago by the lips now pale and silent, Davey flings himself beside the fallen man, raises the head to the pillow of his breast, tears open Geoffrey Stirling's vest, and thrusts his hand in above the heart that sorrow and sin have broken.

"It beats!" he cries, looking rapturously up to Cuthbert Deane, who bends above the two. "Thank Heaven!"

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PRICE TWOPENCE

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLV. A DETERMINED YOUNG LADY.

WHEN this offer had been made to Harry Annesley he found it to be absolutely necessary that he should write a further letter to Florence. He was quite aware that he had been forbidden to write. He had written one letter since that order had been given to him, and no reply had come to him. He had not expected a reply; but still her silence had been grievous to him. It might be that she was angry with him, really angry. But let that be as it might, he could not go to America, and be absent for so long a period, without telling her. She and her mother were still at Brussels when January came. Mrs. Mountjoy had gone there, as he had understood, for a month, and was still at the embassy when three months had passed. "I think I shall stay here the winter," Mrs. Mountjoy had said to Sir Magnus, "but we will take lodgings. I see that very nice sets of apartments are to be let." But Sir Magnus would not hear of this. He said, and said truly, that the ministerial house was large; and at last he declared the honest truth. His sister-in-law had been very kind to him about money, and had said not a word on that troubled subject since her arrival. Mrs. Mountjoy, with that delicacy which still belongs to some English ladies, would have suffered extreme poverty rather than have spoken on such a matter. In truth she suffered nothing, and hardly thought about it. But Sir Magnus was grateful, and told her that if she went to look for lodgings he should go to the lodgings and say that they were not wanted. Therefore Mrs. Mountjoy remained where she was,

entertaining a feeling of increased good-will towards Sir Magnus.

Life went on rather sadly with Florence. Anderson was as good as his word. He pleaded his own cause no further, telling both Sir Magnus and Lady Mountjoy of the pledge he had made. He did in fact tell two or three other persons, regarding himself as a martyr to chivalry. All this time he went about his business looking very wretched. But though he did not speak for himself, he could not hinder others from speaking for him. Sir Magnus took occasion to say a word on the subject once daily to his niece. Her mother was constant in her attacks. But Lady Mountjoy was the severest of the three, and was accounted by Florence as her bitterest enemy. The words which passed between them were not the most affectionate in the world. Lady Mountjoy would call her "miss," to which Florence would reply by addressing her aunt as "my lady." "Why do you call me 'my lady'?" "It isn't usual in common conversation." "Why do you call me 'miss'?" "If you cease to call me 'miss,' I'll cease to call you my 'lady.'" But no reverence was paid by the girl to the wife of the British Minister. It was this that Lady Mountjoy specially felt,—as she explained to her companion, Miss Abbott. Then another cause for trouble sprang up during the winter, of which mention must be made further on. The result was that Florence was instant with her mother to take her back to England.

We will return, however, to Harry Annesley, and give the letter, verbatim, which he wrote to Florence:

"DEAR FLORENCE,—I wonder whether you ever think of me or ever remember that I exist. I know you do. I cannot have been forgotten like that. And you yourself are the truest girl that ever owned

to loving a man. But there comes a chill across my heart when I think how long it is since I wrote to you, and that I have not had a line even to acknowledge my letter. You bade me not to write, and you have not even forgiven me for disobeying your order. I cannot but get stupid ideas into my mind, which one word from you would dissipate.

"Now, however, I must write again, order or no order. Between a man and a woman, circumstanced as you and I, things will arise which make it incumbent on one or the other to write. It is absolutely necessary that you should now know what are my intentions, and understand the reasons which have actuated me. I have found myself left in a most unfortunate condition by my uncle's folly. He is going on with a stupid marriage for the purpose of disinheriting me, and has in the meantime stopped the allowance which he had made me since I left college. Of course I have no absolute claim on him. But I cannot understand how he can reconcile himself to do so, when he himself prevented my going to the Bar, saying that it would be unnecessary.

"But so it is, and I am driven to look about for myself. It is very hard at my time of life to find an opening in any profession. I think I told you before that I had ideas of going to Cambridge and endeavouring to get pupils, trusting to my fellowship rather than to my acquirements. But this I have always looked upon with great dislike, and would only have taken to it if nothing else was to be had. Now there has come forward an old college acquaintance, a man who is three or four years my senior, who has offered to take me to America as his private secretary. He proposes to remain there for three years. I of course shall not bind myself to stay as long; but I may not improbably do so. He is to pay my expenses and to give me a salary of three hundred a year. This will perhaps lead to nothing else; but will for the present be better than nothing. I am to start in just a month from the present time.

"Now you know it all, except that the man's name is Sir William Crook. He is a decent sort of fellow, and has got a wife who is to go with him. He is the hardest working man I know, but between you and me will never set the Thames on fire. If the Thames is to be illumined at all, I rather think that I shall be expected to do it.

"Now, my own one, what am I to say about you, and of myself, as your husband that is to be? Will you wait, at any rate, for three years, with the conviction that the three years will too probably end in your having to wait again?

"I do feel that in my altered position I ought to give you back your troth, and tell you that things shall be as they used to be before that happy night at Mrs. Armitage's party. I do not know but that it is clearly my duty. I almost think that it is. But I am sure of this;—that it is the one thing in the world that I cannot do. I don't think that a man ought to be asked to tear himself altogether in pieces, because someone else has ill-treated him. At any rate I cannot. If you say that it must be so, you shall say it. I don't suppose it will kill me, but it will go a long way.

"In writing so far I have not said a word of love, because, as far as I understand you, that is a subject on which you expect me to be silent. When you order me not to write, I suppose you intend that I am to write no love-letter. This, therefore, you will take simply as a matter of business, and as such, I suppose, you will acknowledge it. In this way I shall at any rate see your handwriting.—Yours affectionately,

HARRY ANNESLEY."

Harry, when he wrote this letter, considered that it had been cold, calm, and philosophical. He could not go to America for three years without telling her of his purpose; nor could he mention that purpose as he thought in any language less glowing. But Florence, when she received it, did not regard it in the same light. To her thinking the letter was full of love, and of love expressed in the warmest possible language. "Sir William Crook!" she said to herself. "What can he want of Harry in America for three years? I am sure he is a stupid man. Will I wait? Of course I will wait. What are three years? And why should I not wait? But for the matter of that——" Then thoughts came into her mind which even to herself she could not express in words. Sir William Crook had got a wife, and why should not Harry take a wife also? She did not see why a private secretary should not be a married man; and as for money there would be plenty for such a style of life as they would live. She could not exactly propose this, but she thought that if she were to see Harry just for one short interview before he started, that he might probably then propose it himself.

"Things be as they used to be," she exclaimed to herself. "Never! Things cannot be as they used to be. I know what is his duty. It is his duty not to think of anything of the kind. Remember that he exists," she said, turning back to the earlier words of the letter. "That of course is his joke. I wonder whether he knows that every moment of my life is devoted to him. Of course I bade him not to write. But I can tell him now, that I have never gone to bed without his letter beneath my pillow." This and much more of the same kind was uttered in soliloquies, but need not be repeated at length to the reader.

But she had to think what steps she must first take. She must tell her mother of Harry's intention. She had never for an instant allowed her mother to think that her affection had dwindled, or her purpose failed her. She was engaged to marry Harry Annesley, and marry him some day she would. That her mother should be sure of that, was the immediate purpose of her life. And in carrying out that purpose she must acquaint her mother with the news which this letter had brought to her. "Mamma, I have got something to tell you."

"Well, my dear."

"Harry Annesley is going to America." There was something pleasing to Mrs. Mountjoy in the sound of these words. If Harry Annesley went to America he might be drowned, or it might more probably be that he would never come back. America was, to her imagination, a long way off. Lovers did not go to America, except with the intention of deserting their lady-loves. Such were her ideas. She felt at the moment that Florence would be more easily approached in reference either to her cousin Mountjoy or to Mr. Anderson. Another lover had sprung up too in Brussels of whom a word shall be said by-and-by. If her Harry, the pernicious Harry, should have taken himself to America, the chances of all these three gentlemen would be improved. Any one of them would now be accepted by Mrs. Mountjoy as a bar, fatal to Harry Annesley. Mountjoy was again the favourite with her. She had heard that he had returned to Tretton, and was living amicably with his father. She knew even of the income allotted to him for the present,—of the six hundred pounds a year, and had told Florence that as a preliminary income it was more than double that two hundred

and fifty pounds which had been taken away from Harry,—taken away never to be restored. There was not much in this argument, but still she thought well to use it. The captain was living with his father, and she did not believe a word about the entail having been done away with. It was certain that Harry's uncle had quarrelled with him, and she did understand that a baby at Buston would altogether rob Harry of his chance. And then, look at the difference in the properties! It was thus that she argued the matter. But in truth her word had been pledged to Mountjoy Scarborough, and Mountjoy Scarborough had ever been a favourite with her. Though she could talk about the money, it was not the money that touched her feelings. "Well;—he may go to America. It is a dreadful destiny for a young man, but in his case it may be the best thing that he can do."

"Of course he intends to come back again."

"That is as it may be."

"I do not understand what you mean by a dreadful destiny, mamma. I don't see that it is a destiny at all. He is getting a very good offer for a year or two, and thinks it best to take it. I might go with him for that matter."

A thunderbolt had fallen at Mrs. Mountjoy's feet! Florence go with him to America! Among all the trials which had come upon her with reference to this young man there had been nothing so bad as this proposal. Go with him! The young man was to start in a month! Then she began to think whether it would be within her power to stop her daughter. What would all the world be to her with one daughter, and she in America married to Harry Annesley? Her quarrel with Florence was not at all as was the quarrel of Lady Mountjoy. Lady Mountjoy would be glad to get rid of the girl, whom she thought to be impertinent and believed to be false. But to her mother Florence was the very apple of her eye. It was because she thought that Mountjoy Scarborough was a grand fellow, and because she thought all manner of evil of Harry Annesley, that she wished Florence to marry her cousin, and to separate herself for ever from the other. When she had heard that Harry was to go to America she had rejoiced,—as though he was to be transported to Botany Bay. Her ideas were old-fashioned. But when it was hinted that Florence was to go with him she nearly fell to the ground.

Florence certainly had behaved badly in making the suggestion. She had not intended to make it;—had not in truth thought of it. But when her mother talked of Harry's destiny, as though some terrible evil had come upon him,—as though she were speaking of a poor wretch condemned to be hanged, when all chances of a reprieve were over,—then her spirit rose within her. She had not meant to say that she was going. Harry had never asked her to go. "If you talk of his destiny I am quite prepared to share it with him." That was her meaning. But her mother already saw her only child in the hands of those American savages. She threw herself on to a sofa, buried her face in her hands, and burst into tears.

"I don't say that I am going, mamma."

"My darling, my dearest, my child!"

"Only that there is no reason why I shouldn't, except that it would not suit him. At least I suppose it would not."

"Has he said so?"

"He has said nothing about it."

"Thank Heaven for that. He does not intend to rob me of my child."

"But, mamma, I am to be his wife."

"No, no, no!"

"It is that that I want to make you understand. You know nothing of his character;—nothing."

"I do know that he told a base falsehood."

"Nothing of the kind! I will not admit it. It is of no use going into that again, but there was nothing base about it. He has got an appointment in the United States, and is going out to do the work. He has not asked me to go with him. The two things would probably not be compatible." Here Mrs. Mountjoy rose from the sofa and embraced her child, as though liberated from her deepest grief. "But, mamma, you must remember this;—that I have given him my word, and will never be induced to abandon it." Here her mother threw up her hands and again began to weep. "Either to-day or to-morrow, or ten years hence,—if he will wait as long I will,—we shall be married. As far as I can see we need not wait ten years, or perhaps more than one or two. My money will suffice for us."

"He proposes to live upon you?"

"He proposes nothing of the kind. He is going to America because he will not propose it. Nor am I proposing it,—just at present."

"At any rate I am glad of that."

"And now, mamma, you must take me back home as soon as possible."

"When he has started."

"No, mamma. I must be there before he starts. I cannot let him go without seeing him. If I am to remain here, here he must come."

"Your uncle would never receive him."

"I should receive him."

This was dreadful;—this flying into actual disobedience. Whatever did she mean? Where was she to receive him? "How could you receive a young man in opposition to the wishes, and indeed to the commands, of all your friends?"

"I'm not going to be at all shamefaced about it, mamma. I am the woman he has selected to be his wife, and he is the man I have selected to be my husband. If he were coming I should go to my uncle and ask to have him received."

"Think of your aunt."

"Yes; I do think of her. My aunt would make herself very disagreeable. Upon the whole, mamma, I think it would be best that you should take me back to England. There is this M. Grascour here, who is a great trouble, and you may be sure of this, that I intend to see Harry Annesley before he starts for America."

So the interview was ended; but Mrs. Mountjoy was left greatly in doubt as to what she might best do. She felt sure that were Annesley to come to Brussels, Florence would see him,—would see him in spite of all that her uncle and aunt, and Mr. Anderson, and M. Grascour could do to prevent it. That reprobate young man would force his way into the embassy, or Florence would force her way out. In either case there would be a terrible scene. But if she were to take Florence back to Cheltenham, interviews to any extent would be arranged for her at the house of Mrs. Armitage. As she thought of all this, the idea came across her, that when a young girl is determined to be married nothing can prevent it.

Florence in the meantime wrote an immediate answer to her lover, as follows:

"DEAR HARRY,—Of course you were entitled to write when there was something to be said which it was necessary that I should know. When you have simply to say that you love me, I know that well enough without any further telling.

"Go to America for three years! It is very, very serious. But of course you must know best, and I shall not attempt to interfere. What are three years to you and

me? If we were rich people, of course we should not wait; but as we are poor, of course we must act as do other people who are poor. I have about four hundred a year; and it is for you to say how far that may be sufficient. If you think so, you will not find that I shall want more.

"But there is one thing necessary before you start. I must see you. There is no reason on earth for our remaining here,—except that mamma has not made up her mind. If she will consent to go back before you start, it will be best so. Otherwise you must take the trouble to come here,—where I am afraid you will not be received as a welcome guest. I have told mamma that if I cannot see you here in a manner that is becoming, I shall go out, and meet you in the streets, in a manner that is unbecoming.

"Your affectionate—wife that is to be,
"FLORENCE MOUNTJOY."

This letter she took to her mother, and read aloud to her in her own room. Mrs. Mountjoy could only implore that it might not be sent; but prevailed not at all. "There is not a word in it about love," said Florence. "It is simply a matter of business, and as such I must send it. I do not suppose my uncle will go to the length of attempting to lock me up. He would I think find it difficult to do so." There was a look in Florence's face as she said this which altogether silenced her mother. She did not think that Sir Magnus would consent to lock Florence up, and she did think that were he to attempt to do so, he would find the task very difficult.

SURVEYING AND INSPECTING, OF OLD AND TO-DAY.*

FARMER: Sir, I am glad to have so happily met with you, for if I be not mistaken, you are a Surveieur of Land.

SURVEIOUR: Admit it so, sir, what then?

FARMER: I have heard much evill of the profession; and to tell you my conceits plainly, I think the same both evill and unprofitable.

SURVEIOUR: Speak you this by conjecture, by report of others, or by due experience of your own?

The farmer answers sweepingly. He speaks by all three. As a consequence, his speaking has weight in it. As a consequence, he is convinced that a surveyor cannot possibly be "innocent," as this one, in lengthy vindication of his post and

method, declares himself to be; and growing more and more stubborn and aggressive, the farmer bursts out at length with the sharp denunciation and the angry question, "Fye upon you! Will you bring us to be slaves?"

The quaint parley took place in those early Stuart days when James was just shaping himself and fitting himself out of Scotch usages into the usages proper for the English throne. It was a quaint parley that runs all through a neat little square volume called *The Surveieur's Dialogue*, having for its date the years 1607 to 1610, and for its author John Norden, surveyor to poor Prince Henry, the king's ill-fated eldest son.

The conversational mode John Norden adopts of making the art of surveying known was hit upon by him for sound strategic reasons. It was to relieve the dryness of the theme; it was to induce young princes—of Scotch birth or otherwise—lured by this relief, to give the theme attention; it was to induce "lords" and other persons "of good condition" to believe in surveying and inspecting as a wholesome power, possessing good sterling point and purpose; it was to induce them all to cast away the touchy dread that surveying was a vexatious scrutiny, a kind of priestly and uncanny inquisition "to pry into men's titles and estates," was some of the other treacherous and unholy processes it was actually pronounced to be, again and again, in various methods by the book's talkative and rebellious farmer.

And, as may be foretold, the farmer, long before the finis of the interesting little volume, is represented as accepting the unpopular faith laid before him, implicitly. It was a result that, on national grounds, was devoutly hoped for. It was a result that was indeed imperatively at that period required. Readers of Dr. Gardiner's recent *Fall of the Monarchy of Charles the First* will not need to be reminded why. They will have been informed how, at the very time John Norden was looking for a good result from his *Dialogues*, Henry, his prince and royal patron, youth as he was, was enjoying a boat-hunt, in full deep water, after deer, in Hatfield Chase; the deer, reduced to swimming over the undrained and unsurveyed land by the flooding of the Humber, having attracted the princely sportsman, and having been rowed after easily by him and his party, till there had been a capture of every one of the herd.

* A Practical Guide for Inspectors of Nuisances. By F. R. Wilson, Surveyor for the Rural Sanitary Authority of the Union of Alnwick, etc. Knight and Co. 1881.

Readers of the same work, too, will have been informed how, as well as this Hatfield Chase, which covered seventy thousand acres, all of them under water for weeks whenever circumstances led to the swelling of the great river, there was that district of the fen-country round by Ely, that was full of agued men in boats, and agued men on stilts, and agued sick in mouldering huts, which had to be abandoned when floods were bad; and readers will be aware how greatly against the grain of these very agued people, and against the grain of their landlords, or fen-lords, and others, was the project—just then being considered, and assuming shape—of authorising the Dutch craftsman, Vermuyden, to survey these vast wide plains and to drain them, with the end that they might be metamorphosed into cornfields and safe pasturage, and become a part and parcel of available and money-making England. And does not this opposition to the huge drainage scheme show one great cause why John Norden laboured to prove that his art was the reverse of "evill and unprofitable?" In his pages the farmer was the embodiment of the Extreme Left on these surveying and inspecting questions; the farmer was this, whether, to vary the effect, he changed to "a Lord," as the dialogues went on, or to "a Baylie," or to "the Jury." His utterances were printed in black letter, demonstrating the far-behind condition of his mind, and contrasting it with the liberal knowledge and outlook of the surveyor, who speaks throughout in reformed and enlightened Roman; and it took a great deal of talk about "Theodelites," and "Chaines," and "the Plaine Table," it even took the production of those instruments, and the actual use of them, before John Norden thought it judicious to represent his antagonist as being compelled to cry, "Peccavi."

Yet that conversion and cordial acceptance should be brought about by The Dialogue is no wonder, even looked at by the light of to-day. For the surveyor says, quite with modern reasoning: "We have in our dayes many and great buildings, a comely ornament it is to the face of the earth, and were it not that the smoake of so many chimneyes did raise so many duskie cloudes in the ayre to hinder the heat and light of the Sunne from earthly creatures, it were the more tolerable." For the surveyor says, in more

modern spirit still: "These springs I like well. A house without lively water is maymed . . . and I see the conduits are made of earthen pipes, which I like farre better than them of Lead, both for sweetnesse and continuance under the ground." And the surveyor says: "This house standeth warm and comfortable towards the South-East, to which the best lights are made fitly to serve; though if the ground would have served, I like plain South the better point for the comfort of the Sunne at all times of the yeere." And the surveyor furthermore says: "I marvell men are not more forward in planting of Apple-trees, Peare-trees, Crab-stockes, and such like, in their hedges, betweene their fields; as well as in Orchards: a matter praise worthy and profitable to the planter, and to the Commonwealth very beneficiall." And when the surveyor has touched these several points, he seems to have put his finger on most of the matters over which smoke abatement societies see it right to interfere now; he seems to hit the items over which water supply Bills propose to legislate, over which sanitary protection associations look sharply, and companies for the utilisation of waste grounds bestir themselves; and must be declared in this way to have had a conception of all of the fundamental principles concerning safe and savoury living that are grappled with and set forth officially in Mr. Wilson's Practical Inspectors' Guide to-day; and surely, as far as theory goes, there is little left in the Jacobean authority further to be desired.

But, before noting systematically, by means of Mr. Wilson's comprehensive hand-book, what the science with which it deals has developed into at the present time, a little more must be set down to show the up-hill work surveyors and inspectors have had, ever since their institution, to get their usefulness or bare "innocence" understood. Here is a little book by Robert Callis, barrister. It was published to define the scope and intent of the Statute of Sewers, passed in the twenty-third of Henry the Eighth (cap. five), as commented upon by Henry's judge, Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, in his work, *Of the Surveying of Lands*, printed in 1539. Callis was reading to his Inn, in August, 1622; and he said: "Judge Fitzherbert holds a Surveyor of very small esteem in his power and authority; he holds that he may hear, see, and say nothing; Oier, Voier, et Rien Dier." Surely, Tudor surveyors and

inspectors might as well have been blind, and deaf, and dumb.

But Robert Callis argues to set the dictum aside. "In four Edward the First," he says, "a Surveyor is there described to be a man which is to view the work and to make enquiry; whereby it appeareth that a Surveyor is an actor, and not a looker-on, as Mr. Fitzherbert would have him." It is better. And let a surveyor be acknowledged to be an actor, in that early meaning of the word. For all that, when sewers were the objects to be inspected and surveyed, surveyors were actors over whom even Callis had many times to mourn and moan. "Discretion," he cries, "is the herb of grace that I could wish every Commissioner of Sewers well stored withal!" And that there may be no mistake, he sets down what he took a sewer to be. "It is a Fresh-water Trench, or small Current," he says, "or little River compassed on both sides with Banks. It is a common publike stream, whereas a Gutter is a straight private running water; and the use of a Sewer is common, and of a Gutter peculiar. Some, mincing the word, compound it of two words, Sea and Were, saying that nomina sunt consonantia rebus; . . . and I am of opinion," is Callis's summing up, judicially, "that it is a diminutive of a river." Right, no doubt. And the Fleet Sewer for one, would have been a little river "compassed on both sides with Banks;" a little river bubbling and bright enough, till, with compound rate of increase, a Tudor populace became a Stuart populace, a Stuart populace grew into a Hanoverian populace; and, sanitary inspection and surveying being still looked upon as "evill and unprofitable," housewives and handicraftsmen ignored the legal distinction between the "common" use of a sewer and the "peculiar" use of a gutter, and, in default of the existence of the accommodations known as sewers and gutters to-day, city-inhabitants all used the one and the other as they willed, making both at last only synonymous with unsightliness and pollution.

Now, "View," says the same Robert Callis, still striving to define surveying, "is the primary part of Survey; and Survey is much, but not altogether, directed by view."

It is puzzling to get mastery over this subtle distinction. It is as puzzling as the Statute of Sewers of the Twenty-third of Henry the Eighth itself; which, said Callis, "must be my chief guide to direct my fairest passage through these uncouth

ways," yet which "doth distribute itself into all these particular Branches: Walls, Banks, Ditches, Gutters, Goats, Calceys, Bridges, Streams, Mills, Ponds, Fish-garths, Mildams, Locks, Hebbingwers, Sluces, Getties, Hecks, Flood-gates," into other "Lets and Impediments," still.

What was a Tudor pond, for instance? to name one item assigned to the charge of these mediæval sewers' commissioners. It was "a standing Ditch, cast by the Labour of Men in their private Grounds, to serve his house and household with necessary Waters." Then, what law had surveyors and inspectors to set in force, with respect to bridges? The first Statute of Bridges, Callis shows, is in Magna Charta, cap. fifteen; an antiquity respectable enough, it might have been thought, to have ensured perfection in practice. But then there came in that hindering subtlety of "View being the primary part of Survey, and Survey being much, but not altogether, directed by view." But then there came in, too, counter-statutes with counter-objects; there came in over-lappings, and over-ridings; rendering the Act a bewilderment of rights and duties, in contemplation of which Callis cried out confusedly: "If this Statute of Magna Charta should be in force, I take it that it would abate much of the power of the Commissioners of Sewers; for it seemeth, by the letter of it, that either no Bridges were to be repaired, but such as were made in the time of Henry the Second and before, neither should any be bound to repair them but such as in his time had then used, and were bound to" do such repairing. And the inevitable end of this was that as, undoubtedly, there were none of the subjects of Henry the Second left in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and as, as undoubtedly, there were none of the subjects of Henry the Second left when the reign of Henry the Eighth was over, so there was no obligation on anybody, anywhere, then and later, to repair bridges at all; and view, primary or secondary, was so lamentably obscured by haze, that it was omitted mostly as too intricate, and grew to be stigmatised as "evill and unprofitable."

For all that—nay, because of all that—sanitary enactments followed sanitary enactments of old, almost as rapidly as sanitary enactments follow sanitary enactments to-day. There was this (Office and Authority . . . of Surveyors of Highways, etc.; By William Nelson, 1718) concerning plague. "Plague," the startling provision

begins; "An infectious Person . . . having a Sore not cured . . . commanded to keep in, and afterwards going abroad . . . 'tis Felony; but if he hath no Sore, he is to be punished as a Vagrant, and bound to his good Behaviour for a year; and"—let it be marked emphatically—"if such Person is wounded by a Watchman, attempting to come forth, the Watchman is not punishable." There was this, concerning vending unfit food: "Measled Pork (15 Car. 2). Persons selling Swines' Flesh measled, or dying with the murrain, shall be amerced for the first offence, Pillory for the second, fined for the third, and abjure the Town for the fourth." There was this, about cleansing and maintenance of roads: "If in scouring the Ditches they lay the soil in the Highways, and suffer it to lie there six months"—which was indulgence enough, assuredly—"they forfeit twelvepence per Load." And this (by a statute of the Fifth of Elizabeth): "Those who have Lands adjoining to the Highway, in which Ditches ought to be, must scour them as often as there is Occasion, and lay Trunks or Bridges where there are Cart-ways into any Ground, that the Water may have a free Passage." And these: "The Surveyors have Power to turn any Spring or Water-course out of the Highways into those Ditches." "The Surveyors may take Stones and Rubbish already dug out of any Quarry, without leave of the Owner, but cannot dig without leave." "The Surveyor must give publick Notice from Time to Time every four Months what Defaults he finds, this Notice to be given in the Parish Church the next Sunday after Sermon ended."

There was more, of course, and there was more still. There was so much, that the whole, or that the group of examples forming a shadowy index to the whole, shows the Merrie Days of Old to have been overflowing with surveying and inspecting incidents not, perhaps, in respect of its merrieness, always reflected upon and suspected. There was, for instance, all the law and there was all the working of the law, about who these active and efficacious surveyors and inspectors were to be. They were the people themselves; such people having to perform their unpaid duty compulsorily. "Two Tradesmen," one short clause says, "must be chosen by the constables, etc., on Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week yearly to be Surveyors of the Highway, who must take upon them the said Office Seven Days after the Election

and Notice, or for their Refusal forfeit One Pound." There was all the law, again, and there was all the working of the law, about what the "Nusances" were, which these "Tradesmen" had, in this compulsory way, to inspect and to get removed. "'Tis a Nuisance," says another short clause, "to erect a Gate cross a Highway, tho' the Gate is easy to be opened; any Man may break it or cut it. So 'tis to erect a Dam on his own Land, and Part of it on another Man's Land, and therefore the other Person may pull his Part down, tho' the Owner's part fall." "So 'tis," in another clause, "Hooping and cleansing Vessels in the Streets, mending Empty Coaches, or sawing Timber or Stone." And "so 'tis Laying Ashes, Dirt, etc., before the Houses and Walls of other Persons, or before Church-Walls, or throwing any noisome Thing in the common Shore, Highway, or private Vault." "So 'tis"—but every year of every reign of every monarch is seen, on opening any volume of the list of public records, to teem thickly with "Assizes," with statutes, with prohibitions, with permits, with regulations. Some of them were never to let home-growths go out of the land; some of them were never to let over-sea growths come in; some were to take heed of the "Drinking-Pots of Brass caused by the King preceding King Edgar to be fixed to Posts near such Springs which were contiguous to the Highways, that Travellers might drink out of them and be refreshed;" some were decreeing arrangements in respect of air, of light, of food, of drink, of shelter, of sale, of barter, of intercourse, of tillage. Every year of every reign of every monarch was so prolific of high-laws, bye-laws, pains, penalties, that there does not seem to have been a single movement of hand or foot, or head, or eye, there does not seem to have been a single rise or fall of earth, of water, of slope, of level, of meadow, of mire, of front, of side, of causeway, which could not somehow be made a nuisance to a neighbour, which did not therefore require some official surveying and inspecting, and which did not, by some batch of legislators or another, at some time, fully and severely get it.

Undoubtedly then, after as much as this, the sanitary surveying and inspecting of this year of grace has been reached, and the latest book upon the subject, Mr. Wilson's Practical Guide, may be opened. It is a careful hand-book, entering quite

efficiently into all the details of the necessary, but (in the working) still unpopular science of which it treats. In it there is an abstract of all the most recent legislation on sanitary matters, there is a sufficiently comprehensive embrace of all branches of it; and the whole is presented in a compact and useful form. Intended as the little volume is for a pocket-companion for the *bonâ fide* use and instruction of surveyors and inspectors—for the *bonâ fide* use of the largely-increasing body of officials who are no longer Oier, Voier, et Rien Dier, but who must be actors in a real and prompt sense, or they would forfeit much more than the twenty-shilling fine imposed on their refractory amateur predecessors—the Guide glances at the historic Acts that have also had a glance here, and then it takes the Act passed in 1847; it takes all the Acts passed in the succeeding years as each year came; it goes down to the far-extending Public Health Act of 1875, and its successor, on Interments, passed as late as 1879, showing, in each case, the most efficient manner in which each Act can be applied. General Orders of the Local Government Board, too, issued so near to the date of publication as 1880, are set out as a needful supplement to these; Model Bye-Laws are given; Requisitions; similar Official Hints and Explanations relating to to-day; consequently, nothing has been omitted by Mr. Wilson necessary technically to complete a sanitary officer's mental and legal outfit, so to speak, and "Surveieurs," and all persons connected with a surveyor's "evill profession," might meet plain-worded farmers complacently, after mastering the purport of the Guide's lessons and experiences, confident that they could brush away all Tudor, and Stuart, and early Hanoverian prejudices.

Technical knowledge, however, is not the aim here; let that be sought for, in the book itself, by those whose avocations need it; to the general reader there is an abundance of interest in the scores of enactments relating to wholesome living which have become part and parcel of British institutions, and this interest is quite enough to make Mr. Wilson's pages very suggestive and very profitable reading. Here is a note on Cellar Dwellings (pp. 103 and 104): "They must be at least seven feet in height, and at least three feet above the surface of the street or ground adjoining; . . . they must be drained by means of drains laid at least one foot below the level of the floor; . . . each

must have a window of at least nine superficial feet"—that is, only a yard high and a yard wide, say—"clear of the sash-frame. Any steps that may be necessary for access to these cellar dwellings, or to the buildings above them, must not be across or opposite the windows, or within six inches of it. . . . Should any person pass the night in a cellar, it is to be considered occupied as a dwelling." Here is a note concerning What Constitutes Houses being Unfit for Human Habitation (p. 106 et seq.), and it comes in well, after reading what human beings may permissively live in—and surely die in, if the one night of sleeping sufficient for technicality should be succeeded by a few more—"In rural districts cottages are often found under the same line of roof-top as the stables and cow-byres. The floors are roughly paved with large, uneven, and defective stone flags, or with soddened bricks, or by tiles more or less broken. The walls are wet or bulging. The rain comes in at the roof, and perhaps at the windows, and under the door as well. The wind whistles aloud. There is no ceiling, and the rafters are only concealed by calico drawn across them, which contrivance the cottager's wife can manage herself. And there are always two, and often three, doors opening into the one room which serves for the sleeping apartment as well as kitchen and parlour. Such a cottage as this is unfit for human habitation." Truly. Yet who does not recognise the picture? Who could not point to scores of country "homes" precisely like this one? Again: "In large towns there are . . . the back kitchens let as family residences; the lofts over stables in mews; the attics where there are no fire-places, . . . the bake-house with a bed in it; these are highly prejudicial to health, and consequently are unfit for human habitation. Again: "When a house and the rooms in it are dark, damp, low, ruinous, decaying, with bad walls and floors and roofs, and accumulations of soil against them, and have ash-middens built against them, enabling the moisture in them to soak through, or when they have stables, or cow-byres, or pig-sties, joined on to them to such an extent as to make them unwholesome, or have only a selection of these unsanitary conditions, they must be eyed with deep condemnation." Yes. And yet a case is given of a Mrs. Millar who had been allowed charitably to get into such a cottage (closed as unfit by its owner) for a

week or two till she obtained a proper lodging, and who obstinately and obstructively refused afterwards to let her gift-house go! In the end her involuntary landlord had to get rid of her by a magistrate's order of ejectment.

Here is a note (p. 33) concerning Breaches of Sanitary Acts, and what an inspector is to do when complaints of such breaches reach him. "He is to visit the spot as soon as practicable, and enquire into the facts of the case. In towns these notices or complaints are most frequent concerning the absence of water; or temporary stoppage of supply; or the accumulations in a neighbour's ash-pit; stoppage of sewers; soakage of sewerage; offensive animals kept by neighbours; . . . in rural districts complaints are most frequent concerning damp cottages, no water, neighbours' pigeons and chickens, neighbours' ash-pits, killing animals close to dwellings, manure heaps, etc." All such offences "as are likely to be removed on the service of a notice from the inspector can be so treated; for others, where there is likely to be delay or difficulty, the inspector must apply to his authority for special instructions before action." This, because a grievance might be "merely a landlord's business, and not in the province of the Authority;" in which case, if the inspector involved his township, or parish, in matters in which it ought not to have been involved, he might well have cried out to him, "Fie upon you!" and be told that he was "evill and unprofitable."

Here is a note concerning the outbreak of disease (p. 44): "The Inspector's duty is to . . . see to the cleansing and disinfecting of houses, . . . to superintend either the disinfection or the destruction of bedding and clothing, the conveyance of infected persons to a hospital or other place of destination, . . . also to see to the disinfection of any public conveyances that have been used by infected persons." Here is a note concerning water supply in country places (p. 85): "A picturesque village is here on a salmon-haunted stream." (The Guide writes from the north-country, let it be remembered; and writes as the north-country is.) "It is a wide, sloping street, forking into two at the lower end down by the river, with high banks topped by luxuriant trees looking down on it. Here, too, is a grand old castle, shattered and roofless. Here, too, is a venerable Norman church, with massy Norman arches and old oak carvings. There is a fine market-

cross still standing in situ, and there is a general air of serenity and historic interest." May Warkworth be written as the label under this attractive picture? And may the river overhung by luxuriant trees wash the ferns and rushes at the foot of the Hermit's Cell, and be the stream that must have been crossed by Warkworth's historic lovers? It seems likely. Any way, read what comes next: "But down both edges of the road are open channels running with dirty moisture. Behind most of the houses, in a little back-yard, are two and sometimes three features: one a well, one a pig-sty, and from the third, "past the well and close to it, runs a stone cundy across the yard and through the house, generally below the floors, to convey the liquid refuse from it to the channel in the street." With which inner view, and from which "seamy side," must all picturesqueness be weighed and judged, now that the rules of surveying and inspecting are sown broadcast by means of Practical Guides, and Public Health Acts make surveyors and inspectors plenipotentiary and imperative.

Now, every person reading what has been put here to be read must have been stirred by a determination to help surveyors and inspectors with all the power to help that each one possesses. Surveyors and inspectors, to do their duty thoroughly, require public countenance, it is certain. Any of the public complaining to surveyors and inspectors, and endeavouring to get grievances removed, require public countenance, it is more certain still. To get this public countenance, or this moral support, or this distinct seal of approbation, many well-known hygeists and physicians have banded themselves together into a Sanitary Protection Association, which has meetings not only in the metropolis, but in many provincial towns. Professor Huxley is the president of this; Professor Fleming Jenkins was its promoter; it is founded to "assist its members to a condition of things in which they may be sure of pure water and well-drained premises;" and that it should succeed in attaining its objects must be the wish of all, in the heartiest sincerity.

A DRIVE.

THROUGH the thick air the tall majestic trees
Loomed like gaunt ghosts; the leafless hedges
showed
A faint dim line; there was no breath of breeze,
No flock of sunshine on the long straight road;
While with a steady, muffled, rhythmic beat,
Fell the dull echo of the horses' feet.

And all the while through the long leagues, I know
 One whom I love seemed sitting at my side ;
 I thought I heard his voice in accents low,
 I thought he watched my lips as I replied ;
 Nor feared nor marvelled as we swept along,
 His hand claspt mine ; Love lapped us, calm and
 strong.

Till with a start and clash of wheels we stopped,
 The red light glimmered from the open door ;
 Over my Paradise the dark veil dropped,
 And all the world was as it was before,
 Ere through the hush of the November weather,
 We two, had that sweet mystic drive together.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. III. THE DOCTOR.

THE doctor's name was Frederick Goldingham, and his qualification was that of M.R.C.S., L.S.A., but no one in Shillingbury ever thought of speaking of him in terms such as these. He was simply "the doctor," the house where he lived was "the doctor's," and I venture to say that no other words in the way of description would have been wanted in speaking of him to any one dwelling within a five-mile radius of Shillingbury. The figure of the doctor—in fine weather, mounted on his old grey cob ; in foul, packed securely into his trim gig beside his groom—was a familiar sight in all the deeply-rutted and weather-worn cross-roads which led from one village to another. The labourers at work in the fields all knew him, and they would never let the doctor pass without some rough but hearty sign of greeting. The youngsters who shouted and halloed to keep the rooks away from the newly-sown corn in the spring, and tore down the bushes in search of nuts and blackberries in the autumn, would always get up on the banks as the doctor went by and grin him the widest grin of which their mouths were capable. They always got a nod or a smile or a kind word in return, and sometimes, if they were very old friends with very long strings of small brothers and sisters belonging to them, they would get a penny.

There was a story—a strange and very painful one—which used to be told about the manner in which the doctor first came to Shillingbury. He was not sprung from the place, or even from the county. Fate, cruel to him and kind to us, drove him out of the storm and stress of the world to find a quiet resting-place amongst us.

Many years ago, before I was born, a post-chaise drove up to the door of The Black Bull late in the afternoon of a bitter December day. A young man, not more than twenty-five years old, descended

from it, bearing in his arms a two-year-old baby, a little girl, who was crying bitterly with cold, and not without cause, for the roads were fast becoming blocked, and the horses had toiled along at snails' pace for the last hour. A fire was lighted in the best sitting-room, and under the kind care of Mrs. Purvis, the landlady, the little child soon forgot her woes and sank into a deep slumber. Stray guests of any sort were rare at The Black Bull, and it was only natural that there should have been plentiful comment and speculation in the kitchen and bar-parlour about the new comers. No one in the house had ever heard of the like before—a father travelling alone with a baby child—and there was something in the look of the father himself which tended to deepen the mystery. He was a tall slightly-made young man with features almost effeminate in their delicate chiselling. His manner was strangely absent, and a look of the deepest melancholy was fixed on his countenance. He spoke a few words to the landlady as he gave the little girl into her charge, and going into his room he assented, by gesture rather than by word, to the suggestions of the waiter that he should take some dinner. The dinner was served, and the guest left alone, but when the waiter, wondering that no bell had been rung for nearly an hour, went back to the room, he found him still sitting over the fire staring vacantly at the burning embers just as he had done while the dinner-table was being prepared. He started up, bade the man remove the things and trouble him no more ; and soon afterwards he was heard to go to his bedroom and lock the door.

The hour of noon struck the next day, and the breakfast which had been prepared for him still stood untasted. The chambermaid had knocked at the bedroom door, and had heard sounds within which told that the occupant was awake, but he showed no sign of coming forth. Those in the rooms below could hear him pacing up and down with jerky irregular tread, and now and then the sound of muttered words was audible. Then they listened at the door, and they could hear that he was talking to himself in a wild and disconnected manner. Suddenly he gave a piercing shriek, and the moment after he burst out into a peal of maniacal laughter, that awful sound which is never heard apart from delirium or some acute mental torment. They broke open the door, and

found him in the grip of a severe attack of brain-fever. For days he lingered between life and death, and even when the doctors could say his life was safe, they declined to promise that his reason would be restored to him unclouded. The blow which had struck him down had evidently been a crushing one, and he rallied very slowly, mentally as well as physically, from the shock. When he began to mend, his daily state became the standard subject of conversation in the place. The strange solitary condition of the sick man and the little child, together with the evident cloud of sorrow and mystery shading their immediate past, roused a kindly sympathy, as little marred by curiosity as was possible under the circumstances. Jellies and rich soups, game, and hothouse fruit were sent from our well-to-do townspeople to the convalescent, who rapidly made friends in all quarters as soon as he was able to thank his benefactors in person.

By degrees the story of his past life became known in the place. He was the only son of some rich man in the North of England, one of those masterful, ignorant, selfish parents who regard their children's lives as something belonging to themselves, something to be parcelled out according to their own liking, without in any way consulting the tastes and inclinations of the children themselves. The father had all along determined that the son should follow his footsteps in his business, a manufactory of some sort, and he was astonished beyond measure when the boy told him that he would rather follow some other walk in life. He was a thoughtful, studious lad, fond of chemistry and physical science, and shrinking from the essential details of his father's business—the buying and selling, the turmoil of a strike one week and the grinding down of the workmen's wages the next—with repulsion and horror. He had fully made up his mind before he ventured to speak, and, when once he did speak, he let his father see plainly that he had determined to have some voice in deciding how his own life should be spent. He meant to be a doctor, and he asked his father for nothing more than a very modest annual sum until he should have become qualified to practice. The struggle was long and bitter, but the father gave way at last. The young man threw himself with all his heart into his new career. He gained a brilliant degree in a very short time, but the success did very little to soften down the father's resentment at the destruction of his

favourite ambition. He was even glad when the news came that his son had committed a fresh folly, a real one this time—one which not even his foolish mother could attempt to excuse. He had married the daughter of his landlady in London, and by this imprudence had given his father an excuse for refusing all further intercourse. Then came the hard fight with the world, which all those who hamper their early steps with an imprudent marriage must look forward to; but the sting of poverty was scarcely felt during the lover-like life of the early marriage days, and soon the clouds began to lift. Then came the gradual progress towards success; the step upon the first rung of the ladder; and victory, position, honour, almost within the grasp. Then the dreadful crash. The wife he loved with the whole strength of his simple, truthful nature, for whose sake he had faced obloquy and want, left him and fled with a brainless dolt, the dissolute son of some rich tradesman. The woman herself had always been base. Only the love-blinded eyes of her husband failed to see this. She knew that his friends were rich, and in marrying him she had thought of nothing beyond the good things which their wealth might give her. When she found that her marriage had made the breach, which was wide enough before, impassable, she began to hate the husband she had never loved, and after a little she fled from him with another man.

Goldingham, when he was convalescent, took lodgings in a pretty farm-house, just outside the town. Mr. Carlyon, a gentleman who had made his fortune in the Indies, and who lived at that time in the large old house at the corner of Church Lane, would have had him take up his abode at The Chantry, for so the house was called, but he preferred the independence of his farm-house lodgings.

In the quiet life and good air of Shillingbury he grew rapidly well, and one day, about six months after his first coming, the event happened which led to his final settlement amongst us. Dr. Maddox, our local practitioner, died suddenly in a fit, and we were left without a doctor unless we sent to Offbury, a village seven miles distant. Everyone at once thought of Mr. Goldingham. Everyone liked him, and in compliance with the public wish, he moved into Dr. Maddox's house and settled down for life in Shillingbury.

Many a time I have seen the doctor's portrait, taken when he was a youth, and a hand-

some youth he must have been, but I only remember him as a tall, gaunt, rugged man, with a loose shambling walk, a cheery voice, and a sunny smile, which, bright as it was, could never entirely sweep away the shade of melancholy lingering in the depths of his tender dark-grey eyes. Putting this one thing aside, there was nothing about him to show that he had passed through such a sharp ordeal of pain. As soon as he had fixed himself for good in Shillingbury, it seemed that he set to work with a will to blot out all remembrance of his former life, and begin the world anew, and after a year or two it would have been hard to recognise the broken-hearted world-weary man who came to us through the snow on that bitter winter night, in the clear-sighted strenuous doctor who had a kind word and a bright smile for everyone. Perhaps, though, the impossibility of retrospect, of looking back over a past so blasted and intolerable, may have forced him to keep his energies always keen upon the present or straining forward into the future.

In those days the word sanitation had not been invented, and the science of health was even less exact than it is now. The doctor in his country rounds found human beings—his own poor, as he loved to call them—passing their lives in hovels such as the provident farmer who owned or hired them would hesitate to assign to his choicer litters of pigs; drinking water from wells befouled with poisonous filth; and sinking morally into a condition hardly to be described under the influence of such surroundings. When such things met his eye he was not the man to hold his tongue because by speaking he might happen to tread upon the corns of Squire A. or of Sir Thomas B. He did speak, and spoke loudly enough to call up a wasp's nest about his ears. Even his most loyal friends in Shillingbury wavered a little, and when he was not present, said it was a pity he had made himself so unpopular here and there. These things had been going on ever so many years, longer than anyone in the place could recollect, and they didn't see but what the people living in the cottages the doctor had been making so much fuss about, weren't just as healthy as the tenants of my lord's new model dwellings on Cowdon Heath.

I remember when I was a child that I used to stand in mortal terror of the doctor, for though his heart was kindness itself, his manner was now and then a trifle rough. He had set to work to make him-

self a Shillingbury man from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and it appeared as if he had picked up some of our local imperfections in the process. He had mastered our country dialect and accent with rare completeness; and if you had been on one side of a hedge while he was talking to a countryman on the other, you would never have been able to say which was the clodhopper and which the doctor. It was a bad habit, perhaps, professionally speaking, one which would not have been wise for a fine ladies' physician to indulge in; but our doctor was not often called in to cure the vapours.

The people certainly liked to be talked to by one who did not think himself too grand to use their own rough speech and homely terms, but there was one point on which the doctor did not entirely please them: he would not drench his patients after the good old ultra-allopathic fashion then in vogue. Old Mrs. Jillings, who kept The Five Pigs at Blenheim cross-roads, used to tell him every time she called him in—about once a month on the average—that he would never be the man at doctoring that old Dr. Maddox was.

"Your stuff don't 'pear to take no hold on a body, doctor. I don't believe the last I had was owt but coloured water. I think I shall give up fizzuck altogether and take a good drink of yarbs at night and a dose of salts in the morning."

"Ah, mother," the doctor would answer, "you want a doctor just about as much as your old cow does. I only wish I had a stomach like yours. If you don't get run over, or break your neck down the cellar-stairs, there's no reason why you shouldn't live to be a hundred and twenty."

"Yes, that's all very well, but if you knew how bad I feel sometimes you wouldn't go on o'thatness; but still I don't believe I ever should ha' had a doctor if my darter, as was home from sarvus when I was took bad once, hadn't over-persuaded me."

"Well, I never gave you anything to make you ill, mother, did I? And I'll tell you what. I'll give you a turn of doctoring one of these fine days, and get you to mix me a cup of the wonderful 'yarb' tea. I won't have the salts though at any price."

"You may laugh, doctor, you as don't ail nothing; but I can tell you I must take something to still my liver sometimes. Do you know I woke up t'other night and felt something a heavin' and a heavin' in

my inside, and all at once my liver 'peared to throw 'tself right over, and I ha' never been the same woman since."

The doctor delighted in making Mrs. Jillings talk of her internal ailments.

The good woman's ideas on the subject of the human anatomy were wonderful indeed. The greater organs were, according to her showing, in the habit of breaking loose continually from their moorings, and cruising about in the most reckless manner. The wanderings of the liver just alluded to was one of her most frequent experiences; and hardly a day passed without her heart coming almost up into her mouth, or her lungs getting mixed up with her ribs in a way which must have made respiration a painful labour.

"Never mind, mother, I'll come and see you whether you are ill or not. I often want to give my horse a rest hereabouts, and I never find myself any the worse for a glass of that old ale of yours. I think I'll stick to that and leave the 'yarb' tea alone for the present."

One sweltering autumn, when every day we used to read in the papers of the havoc the dreadful Asiatic cholera was making in London, a man who worked in a tan-yard at Brooksbank, a low-lying village about four miles down the river, was suddenly taken ill and died before the doctor could get to him. Two days after there were three more cases of a similar complaint, which the doctor at once announced to be cholera of the worst type. The disease broke out in one of those nests of hovels which he had long ago condemned as unfit for human habitation. He had written to the owner, asking that a few pounds might be spent in absolutely necessary repairs, but the only answer he received was an insulting threat. Nothing was done, and as time went on the hovels became more and more crowded, and the stench got worse and worse. At last when King Cholera came to claim his own, he touched first of all with his dread sceptre such places as Brooksbank End. The disease spread with alarming speed. The doctor worked with the energy of ten men, and at length persuaded the owner of the tannery to set apart a large shed to be used as an hospital. Indeed, if this had not been done, the village would have been deserted, as already the terror-stricken people were beginning to fly to the adjoining parishes, thereby threatening to spread the plague over all the countryside. Another doctor was summoned from London to look after

the ordinary patients, for Mr. Goldingham spent all his time tending the poor wretches in his extempore hospital and encouraging the devoted nurses whom he had associated with himself in the good work. But all his skill and devotion seemed powerless to make head against the attack of this fearful pest which had swooped down upon us unprepared. Death followed death with awful rapidity, and every day fresh cases were brought in. Still the doctor worked like a horse and never lost heart, for he had studied in Germany, and had seen more of cholera than nine-tenths of the English medical men of the period. At last the plague seemed to have worn itself out, no fresh cases occurred, and the doctor was persuaded to go back every night to Shillingbury to sleep, and give up the bedroom at the tan-office which he had occupied since the sickness broke out. One morning, about a week after this change, the nurses began to wonder that the hour of ten came without finding the doctor at his post. They watched anxiously for his well-known figure striding along the long, straight, dismal causeway which led from the high-road to Brooksbank End, but they watched in vain. Noon came, and they were watching still. A messenger was sent off to learn the cause of his absence, and the report he brought back was that the doctor was slightly unwell, and had thought it wise to take a day's rest. To-morrow no doubt he would be all right again, and would be at the hospital by the usual hour.

But, alas! on the morrow the doctor was much too ill to keep his appointment, and before evening came it was plain that he would only keep one more, that last dread appointment which waits so surely for us all. King Cholera, irate seemingly that the good doctor had snatched so many victims from his grisly clutch, had dealt a last foul blow at the noblest, the most unselfish, the gentlest spirit of us all. When the news got abroad that there was little hope of his recovery, the town seemed like one large household which had just learnt that a beloved father was sick unto death. The people gathered together in groups, talking in subdued voices, and ever upon the same subject. No one had ever known the doctor to be ill for a day, and now, when it was made clear to us that we must lose him, we appeared to be dazed and stupefied by the sudden and crushing blow. Every house would lose a friend, and many a one would lose a wise and affectionate

adviser in matters in no way connected with physical ailment.

But now, after forty years of faithful labour, the time had come for the strenuous worker to lie down to his rest. The valiant soldier had fallen with his face to the foe, as a soldier should. Ah, were I to live to be a hundred I should never forget that day when the doctor was laid in his grave! Every shop was closed from morning till night, and it would be no exaggeration to say that the whole town followed him to his last rest. From the outside villages, too, scores of farm-labourers came in to pay the last tribute of respect to their never-failing friend. There was one bright spot upon the gloomy scene, one event of the day which gratified our pride, and this was the presence at the funeral of some great doctors from London. It was pleasant for us to know that our good friend had honour in the great city as well as amongst ourselves. The report how he had worked and died had been noised abroad, and these gentlemen had come down to do honour to the memory of the obscure country surgeon who had verily earned a nobler renown than crowns or honours or titles can give.

It would have been hard, even for those who knew the doctor best, to say whether his life had been a happy one or not. Certainly, if devotion to duty brings happiness, happiness ought to have been his; for duty, that noblest word, stirred him in every thought, to every action. Duty was his guide of life. Once he had made trial to find his earthly joy in the love of wife and child, but death—the little girl died very soon after the doctor settled amongst us—and something worse than death had robbed him of his treasures, and from thenceforth he set his face like a flint towards the winning of those treasures which are safe from all assault—the consciousness of life well lived, of work well done. He had his consolation in these, no doubt, but I scarcely think they helped him to get well of his wound. His nature was one of those proud sensitive ones which rarely recover from injuries deep as the one he received and never show their scars. He was too actively conscious of the debt he owed to humanity to sit down and sulk in unworthy misanthropy. One of the fountains of joy had been choked and embittered for him, but his work yet lay before him to be done.

His life and death speak for themselves,

they need no eulogy. Indeed, it would be no easy task for me, who knew him so well, to find words to talk of one who, bearing a life-long sorrow at his heart, could pass his life with patience and cheerfulness listening to the querulous grumbling, the discontent—aye, and to the ingratitude sometimes—of a set of uncouth peasants and narrow-minded country tradesmen. Honours and decorations the doctor did not want, but had he hungered after them he would have found they were not meant for such men as himself. These we keep for successful schemers in what is called the world of politics, for victors over hordes of half-naked, half-armed savages, and for the men who can pile up the largest heap of wealth by methods which we discreetly decline to investigate. The age of the martyrs is long past. Had our doctor lived in mediæval Italy, keeping on good terms with the Church, the crown which has been given for an immortal remembrance to the crazy visionary and the filthy monk would surely have been his. But our age is one which lets such noble deeds sink unmarked out of remembrance. We, nowadays, are too busy to carry the memory of such things in our minds for more than a week or two at the most, seeing that a new murder, a new forgery, a new matrimonial scandal in exalted quarters claims our attention almost every time we open our morning papers.

LADIES' COLLEGES.

WHEN many years ago Mr. Tennyson wrote "The Princess," his idea of a ladies' college was regarded as something very graceful and pretty,

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair,

but at the same time as a somewhat extravagant and far-fetched conception. The higher education movement for women has made rapid progress since the date of the poem, with results that for centuries would have been considered extraordinary. There are now two colleges at Oxford and two colleges at Cambridge devoted to the reception of ladies. In one college the daughter of a great author and bishop, in another the daughter of the Prime Minister, bears sway. The Scottish Universities also eagerly welcome ladies, and the University of London bestows its degrees upon them. The

existence of these colleges is bound up with a great movement which for many years has been making silent but effective advances, and which is no doubt destined to a still greater expansion.

Mr. Tennyson does not stand alone in his prevision of ladies' colleges. Other writers have embraced the idea, but at the same time they have apparently regarded it as chimerical. The Princess in *Rasselas* "desired first to learn all sciences, and then proposed to found a college of learned women in which she would preside." Interesting references have been pointed out in such favourite biographies as Dean Stanley's *Life of Dr. Arnold*, and Mr. Trevelyan's *Life of Lord Macaulay*. "There is nothing for girls," wrote Dr. Arnold, "like the degree examination, which concentrates one's reading so beautifully, and makes one master a certain number of books perfectly." One of Lord Macaulay's nieces, "unable to forecast the future of her sex, had expressed a regret that she could never hope to go in for a college examination." Macaulay thereupon produced what he was pleased to call a paper of Questions in Divinity.

Unquestionably the great business of a girl is to grow pretty, and amiable, and nice, and train herself to be a good sweetheart, wife, and mother. Unquestionably also a girl who overstrains her mental powers may be laying up the seeds of nervous and other disorders. Nevertheless, there must be something wrong and incongruous in the fact that at eighteen, when a young man is going up to college and commences the serious studies of life, the young lady of the same age considers her education as complete. It must be for the good of girls that they should enjoy some of the same intellectual advantages which have fallen to the lot of their brothers.

Another great advantage of the new institutions of ladies' colleges is also obvious. Hitherto ladies' schools have to a great degree been in irresponsible hands. However excellently, or however poorly equipped, the self-appointed teachers have had no public credentials to show a fitness for their posts. Now all places for the higher education of women tend to set the matter on a better footing. It may be said that the education of all Englishmen, in the first ten years of their lives, is in the hands of women, who are mothers or teachers. To raise the standard of a woman's education is to raise the standard

of education throughout the country. It is obvious too that in a nation where there are a million more women than men, it must be a great thing to improve and develop the profession of teaching, in which women may increasingly procure a career, honour, means, and usefulness. The Oxford and Cambridge colleges now enable ladies who teach to exhibit exactly the same credentials as those to which men when they become schoolmasters can point on the class-lists, so that parents may have a real security respecting the qualifications of lady-teachers.

Girton College, near Cambridge, justly occupies the place of honour in this group of colleges. It is a familiar spot to all Cambridge men who take the favourite walk to Madingley Hall, and is supposed to have been the place where Gray, while residing at Cambridge, composed much of the famous elegy which is still more closely associated with Stoke Pogis. The ladies' colleges, both at Oxford and Cambridge, owe their beginning and even their existence to the aid and sympathies of members of the two Universities. While Girton College was in process of being built, many a don and undergraduate used to take a ramble in this direction, and to lay an occasional brick in token of their good will. The one distinguishing feature of Girton College is that it proposes to give exactly the same education to young women that the University of Cambridge gives to young men. The commencement of the movement may be said to date back to 1865, when the University of Cambridge first threw open their higher Local Examinations to girls as well as boys.

The origin of Girton College was at Hitchin, some thirty miles from Cambridge. Distinguished University men came over from Cambridge to impart instruction. Now that Girton College has produced many young ladies who have taken honours equivalent to some of the highest University distinctions, they are no longer dependent on University teachers, but can provide teachers of their own. The tie, however, between Cambridge and Girton is of the closest kind, and it is not likely that it will ever be dissolved. The commencement at Hitchin, which we have mentioned, was of a very humble kind. It was in 1869 that six women came to a hired house at Hitchin. It was a plain red-brick house on a hill overlooking the station, to which afterwards an iron dependence

was added. The attainments of these ladies were only scanty, but they were determined to have the same kind of education that the men had, and expected and desired no favour. At the end of a year five ladies went up to Cambridge to be examined. Cambridge examiners consented to look over their papers, and to report upon them according to the University standard. The examination was passed satisfactorily. Subsequently young ladies went up for the "Honours," and were declared worthy of high honours both in classics and mathematics. The prospectus of the institution sets forth that it "is designed to hold, in relation to girls' schools and home teaching, a position analogous to that occupied by the Universities towards the public schools for boys." At the same time it is not absolutely necessary that every student should aim at the standard of University honours or the University degree even. No doubt, the desire is that they should go in as far as possible for degree examinations. At the same time they are at liberty to select any line of study among those belonging to the course. Their progress is tested and reported on. There is a difficult entrance examination to be passed, and it is understood that those who don't really work would be remorselessly sent away. The course of study comprises the following subjects: Ancient Languages (Greek and Latin), Modern Languages (English, French, and German), Mathematics, Divinity, Moral Science, Natural Science, History, Vocal Music. We believe also that some stress is laid on writing correctly to dictation, and in reading aloud well. It must not be supposed that there is any trifling with the various subjects. On the contrary, life is terribly earnest at Girton. Most material interests are concerned. Half the students at Girton have deliberately adopted the scholastic profession, unless matrimony should happen to contravene their intention. They do not so much desire to be governesses (though most ladies would naturally desire for their children a governess furnished with the high credentials which Girton can bestow), as to be head-mistresses, or under-mistresses, in High Schools and other schools for girls. There are now some valuable endowed scholarships for ladies who are taking up the profession of teaching.

In 1872 the institution was transferred from Hitchin to Girton. There have been

two extensions of the building, and a third is in contemplation. At present the college consists of two sides of a triangle, comprising fifty-five sets of rooms for students; rooms for the mistress and three lecturers; a dining hall; prayer room; an hospital, quite isolated; and laboratory and gymnasium distinct from the other buildings. There are about sixty students, and nearly half of these now stay up to read during the Long Vacation. A great deal of expense and trouble has been taken in beautifying and enlarging the grounds. Some six hundred pounds have been lately spent in this way. "The field has been ploughed for grass-sowing next spring, and a belt thirty-three feet deep all round it has been trenched and thickly planted with young trees, as a protection. Fences and gates have also been made and many lesser things set right." The ladies of the college have had a lucky find on the western side of their south lawn. They discovered some three or four hundred cinerary urns, that indicated both cremation and interment, and also some Roman graves. In each was a glass bottle of ashes, a lamp, a small wine-flask, some Samian-ware dishes, and glass vessels prettily wrought and stamped with figures. There were many other curiosities, and the whole, having been exhibited at Cambridge, are now treasured up at Girton.

We may now sketch out the routine of life at Girton. With a few alterations it is very much the same in all the ladies' colleges. The hours of refection are much the same as in all homes. Breakfast, after prayers at eight, goes on from a quarter-past eight to nine. Luncheon is a movable feast from twelve to three. The dinner-hour is six. There is tea at four, and again at nine in the evening. The lectures are generally given in the afternoon. There is a reading-room with use of pianos. The students may invite friends to lunch or dinner, but these friends must always be ladies, an exception being made in the case of father or guardian. There is a certain amount of discipline maintained. Three times a day the ladies have to enter their names on the marking-roll. The gates are closed at dusk in summer, and at six o'clock in winter. Any application for leave of absence must be supported by medical certificates. There is a strict entrance examination in necessary and optional subjects, except for those who have passed such difficult examinations as the matriculation examination of the

University of London, and the Oxford and Cambridge local examinations for senior students. The standard of these stiff examinations is consistently kept up all through the scholastic term. But there is a lighter side to all these severe experiences. The fair undergraduates, for such they really are, are after all very human. There is always music going on indoors, and lawn-tennis out-of-doors. There are At Homes, dancing, old-students' dinners, and a choral society. They have their own periodical and their own debating society, and what is now becoming very common among ladies, a Browning society. Many interesting details of college life are made public. When the students take good places on the honour lists we hear of college songs and "candle processions." Some items of intelligence are very pretty and feminine. We select one or two from *The Girton Review*:

"The weather on the whole has been fine; the sunsets glorious; and a look towards the west at about six o'clock compensates fully for any flatness or dulness in the scenery—though even this country has its delight for those who, like Charles Kingsley, love a wide expanse with its sense of freedom. The walks to Madingley, in quest of cup-moss in February, later of primroses and wild violets, have been, as usual, one of the great sources of enjoyment." "Those mild days were conducive not only to early rising and early breakfast-parties, but also to garden tea-parties. To these last, sometimes to several in succession, 'Jack,' a large Pyrenean mastiff, who arrived last term, and who is now a warm friend of all the students, has been a constant though generally an uninvited visitor." The ladies' debating club evidently must have been great fun. They attended in good number, but seemed to have been rather shy at speaking. We may mention two subjects discussed at ladies' debating clubs, though we have not the Girton subjects. One was "That Modern *Æstheticism* is morbid and harrowing"—carried by a large majority. Another is, "That as Civilisation advances, Patriotism must decline"—lost by a large majority. One lady orator makes the ingenuous confession: "We were too violent often and thought more of expression than of logic. Some of us felt even a little offended when our dearest theories received a deadly thrust." We should mention that the Girton ladies have also gone in for a trapeze, a racquet-court, and a gravel court

club with "coaching classes." In consequence of a fire at a neighbouring farm they have got up a fire brigade, to which Captain Shaw has given much assistance, and prodigies of valour are performed. As an intellectual set-off to such vigorous exercise, Mrs. Dr. Algernon Kingstone gave a lecture on vegetarianism, and several enthusiasts endeavoured to carry out her principles. "It was found, however, that college cooking did not adapt itself readily to a vegetarian diet, and the philosophical experiment dropped."

After Girton College had been in existence for some years Newnham College began. Newnham is only some ten minutes' walk from Cambridge, and presents great advantages in points of convenience. We should say that lectures for women were first started in Cambridge in 1870, and in a few years' time an association was formed for promoting the higher education of women. A house called Newnham Hall was built on a site of two and a half acres, but the accommodation not being sufficient, an amalgamation was made between the Newnham Hall Company and this association, uniting the whole work of the two bodies. The two houses are now known as Newnham College, and are called the South and North Halls. Further building additions are contemplated, one of which is a library. The course of study is absolutely that for the Cambridge honours examinations, and no students are admitted who do not give satisfactory evidence that they are qualified to profit by the course of study. Various ladies have obtained high honours, some of them equivalent to a first class. Two Newnham ladies have taken a degree equivalent to a first class in the classical tripos. We notice with pleasure that there is a loan fund at the disposal of the college by which students of limited means may obtain help towards the payment of their fees. There are a number of small clubs and societies, one of which has a decided air of originality; it is called "The Sharp Practice Club," with the object of "the cultivation of readiness in thought and speech." A good deal of sharp debating goes on, probably as a legitimate result of this society, and on one occasion a lady made a remarkable speech, "founding her opinions on Plato, and illustrating them by her experience in teaching the elements of Greek to a buttermilk man." One of the most eminent members of the little community is to be married, and her marriage is reported as "decidedly a trial." We

observe that the two colleges have a friendly match at lawn-tennis.

One particular feature connected with Newnham College is well worthy of attention; this is the system of instruction by correspondence, which has been going on for twelve years. The system has two objects, one general and one special. The general object is to promote the self-education of women who are unable to obtain sufficient oral teaching, and the special object is to prepare candidates for the higher local examinations. The teachers are either University men or ladies who have practically obtained the same distinctions as University men. We observe that the subjects of Logic, History, and Political Economy are entirely in the hands of ladies. The letters sent are occupied with, first, general directions respecting the reading of books; secondly, papers of questions, the answers to which are looked over and returned with comments; and thirdly, solutions of difficulties. Most of the fees are four guineas, which cover the academic year from October to May, and the student gets a letter about once a fortnight. We calculate that she pays for each letter the familiar legal sum of six-and-eightpence. We observe that the Teachers' Education Loan Committee will make ladies grants of money without interest on certain conditions. There is also a lending library at Cambridge in connection with these classes.

After the system of ladies' colleges had been thoroughly established at Cambridge, the movement, as might naturally be expected, extended to the University of Oxford. There are two ladies' colleges at Oxford, but they have hardly attained to the same scale as the Cambridge colleges. One of these is Somerville Hall, and is founded in memory of that most remarkable woman, Mary Somerville. There is a peculiar propriety in this name for a ladies' college at Oxford. Mrs. Somerville is indeed an eminent example of what women may be able to accomplish. She was not only accomplished in the whole cycle of feminine accomplishments, but also carried a knowledge of mathematics to a point to which very few men have attained. Maria Edgeworth, in one of her letters, says of her: "She is the lady who, Laplace says, is the only woman who understands his works. She draws beautifully, and while her head is among the stars her feet are firm upon the earth." When she wrote to John Stuart Mill on one of his books, the

philosopher expressed his gratitude for "the approbation of one who has rendered such inestimable service to the cause of women by affording in her own person so high an example of their intellectual capabilities." Mrs. Somerville expressed herself as extremely zealous for the emancipation of her sex from the unreasonable prejudices so prevalent in this country against a literary and scientific education for women. She used to say that in the days of her youth a commonly well-informed woman of the present day would have been looked upon as a prodigy of learning. Her daughter says that she took the liveliest interest in everything that has been done of late years to extend high-class education to women, both classical and scientific. She was especially delighted with the establishment of Girton College, "as a great step in the true direction, and one which could not fail to obtain most important results." Her valuable scientific library has been presented to Girton.

Somerville Hall is situated in the broad boulevard-like street of St. Giles, picturesque with the old church, the rows of trees, and quaint irregular houses. The Hall is a fair-sized house. It stands back from the streets, in nearly three acres of very pleasant grounds, extremely well timbered, and which can well hold its ground with some of the college gardens. There are two old cottages within the gates, which have been fitted up as students' rooms, and are favourite chambers. The college began in 1879, with twelve students, and there has been a steady though not a large increase. Students in natural science have the privilege of working in the museum laboratory, and are also allowed the use of the Radcliffe and the Taylor Library. The college has also a good and carefully selected library of its own. The students have hardly the same advantages in professional and inter-collegiate lectures, but the movement at Oxford has not yet attained the full development of Girton.

The other ladies' college at Oxford is the Lady Margaret Hall. This hall is erected under the name of that illustrious lady, Margaret Tudor, Countess of Richmond, who founded the Lady Margaret professorship of Divinity, both at Oxford and Cambridge, and was the munificent foundress of St. John's College and Christ College at Cambridge. In the report of the Lady Margaret Hall, she is justly described as "a lady whose works show her interest both in religious education

and in the universities ; and who, in an age of change and new culture, was forward to secure, by new foundations, the religious culture of that character, and its alliance with Christian work."

It is interesting to know that the lady-principal and students of Newnham Hall, Cambridge, presented the youngest of the ladies' colleges with a gift of books. Other friends have subscribed to lay down a winter lawn-tennis court in the garden. Chemistry seems to have been a favourite study of the ladies. We observe that political economy is a very favourite pursuit in some colleges. It is found that the Hall is mainly recruited from the classes of country gentlemen, clergymen, and professional men, and while some students intend to adopt a scholastic life, many come for the sake of the general training. It is found that the mixture of the two classes is in itself very valuable. There has been a considerable addition to the original building, and something more is contemplated ; but at the same time it is the theory of the college that the number should not exceed a certain limit. "The committee feel the importance of not having too large an institution. So much in the education of young women has to be done by influence rather than rules, and so much of the tone of a place of this kind depends on the individual attention which can be bestowed on each member of it." The Lady Margaret Hall peculiarly approaches to the character of a religious home. The committee seek to found small exhibitions for the benefit of poor ladies. It is gratifying to know that the institution is worked at a small profit, and, in fact, all the colleges are established on a satisfactory business footing.

The Oxford system in several important respects varies from the Cambridge system, and we should not be surprised if eventually it became the more popular of the two. The Cambridge colleges pride themselves on the closest possible adherence to the system of the University of Cambridge, but the Oxford colleges have a wider and more original scope. There has so far been no attempt to open the University examinations to women as has been the case at Cambridge. The standard is said to be that of the men's examination in so far as the different groups correspond to them ; but the groups present some important differences and the amount of work required is not the same. There are two examinations, the Preliminary Examina-

tion which must be passed alike by all, and the Second Examination which is both for pass and honours. It should be observed that the colleges only provide board, lodging, and supervision—it should be added that they also give certain scholarships — all the instruction being given through the Oxford Association for the Higher Education of Women. The examinations are under the direction for Local Examinations, which is a University Board. The following are the subjects for the Examination in Honours, they are eight in number : First, English ; Second, Latin and Greek ; Third, German, French, Italian, Spanish (candidates out of these must bring up German and one other language) ; Fourth, Mathematics, pure and mixed ; Fifth, Ancient History with Original Texts ; Sixth, Modern History with Original Texts ; Seventh, Philosophy ; Eighth, Physical Science. In each section there are three classes. "The Delegates will place in the highest class such only as show great proficiency." English Literature and Modern Languages are not represented in the University course. To pass these examinations residence is not necessary as for the Cambridge Tripos, neither is there any limit as to the time that may elapse between the First and Second Examinations. Our general impression is that on the whole things are made easier to the ladies at Oxford than at Cambridge.

The remarkable movement at Oxford and Cambridge which has resulted in the foundation of these four colleges represents the highest outcome of all that has been done for the higher education of women. It is a movement which has many ramifications, and is extending at home as well as abroad. There is reason to believe that these colleges will be overshadowed by far more magnificent foundations of the future. But nothing will be able to touch them in point of prestige ; in the fact that they hold their own with the old foundations on the shores of the Cam and the Isis. These ladies' colleges are enabled to avail themselves to any extent of the University conveniences and advantages that have accumulated during centuries in these ancient seats. Not the slightest symptom of rivalry has been developed. On the contrary, the old Universities have petted and patronised, and helped in every possible way these intruders on their domains. The comparative silence and celerity with which these new institutions have been developed is a remarkable

feature of our times, and the whole movement one of the most interesting chapters of social progress. Whether there will, in time, be any serious intellectual rivalry between young men and young women at Oxford and Cambridge is a question which hardly comes within the sphere of practical home politics, but the movement will no doubt generally raise the tone of female education throughout the country, and to those ladies who have the requisite leisure and capacity will open a boundless field for intellectual advancement.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II.

CHAPTER XL. HESTER'S GOOD WORK.

THERE was but one opinion among the worthies of The Safe Retreat as to the cause of Squire Stirling's seizure.

"Yo' may tell me what yo've a moind," said Mr. Bindwhistle, addressing an imaginary obstinate-minded person; "but I say as this is the way on't, and the long on't, and the short on't. Sorrow may ha' weakened Maister Geoffrey (I've nought to say agen that view o' the matter), but t' ghost knocked him down."

"Well, I dunnot know—I conna say," put in Amos the tanner dubiously.

Not having seen the ghost Amos did not believe in it with the same faith and fervour as his companions.

"In course you don't know," said Matthew Hawthorne magisterially; "we none on us know, but we can specerlate, and those on us who have given our minds to legal deductions can deduct. Why not? Therefore I say without fear or halting that I agree with Maister Bindwhistle. 'Tis a ghost to knock ony man down, mind that—a very fearsome thing even to a man of good courage and reasonable mind. How much more then to one weakened with lamentable grief? Neighbour Jeremy argufies well. He is one to edify——"

"It scrabblet on t' panes wi' its fingers," said Softie timorously. "It's a way them soart have, and a sorry way too. It's a way to mak' a mon troy to get in 's own boots yed foremost."

"Aye, aye, so 'tis," assented the constable; "and like enoo, when Squire Stirling drew asoide t' curtain to see what was oop, why, theer it stood, wi' no more loife in its face than a dead fish."

"'Tis no wonder he gev' a skrike and

fell right down atop of hisself," said Jake. "My own legs shook under me that toime as I seed 'un flittin' through the trees like a bob-a-link—that did they."

"If thee hadn't such a scarecrow of a body atop of 'em, thy legs 'ud mostly shake under thee, Jake. They're but frail props fer to be a mon's mainstay i' loife, and that's the truth on 't," said Amos.

The good man was not a little sore in that his companions had seen what he had only "heard tell of;" and that, in consequence, their words were looked upon as more weighty than his; hence his sharpness to little Jake.

"They're the best as t' Lord has giv' me, anyway," retorted the cobbler, "and if so be they walk in the way of righteousness they're as good as the stoutest."

"So they are, so they are," put in Farmer Dale from the chimney-corner, where he had been more than usually thoughtful all the evening; "and long may it be ere they forget the way to The Safe Retreat, for wi'out thee, lad, our meeting 'ud be same as a glass of home-brew wi'out no yed to speak of. Thou'rt the life and spirit o' us, little un'—that's what 'tis."

Amos growled something low down in his interior which no one thought it wise to hear. Then his better nature asserted itself, and he looked round the assembly with a twinkle of fun in his eyes.

"I'm a bit cross-grained to-night, chaps," he said; "I'm ruefu' minded i' the matter of that there sperrit. I can't stomach bein' the ony one of yo' as hasn't seen 't."

"Yo' moight ha' had my place wi'out payin' for 't," whined Softie, at which a hearty laugh restored the general good-humour.

But the jolly farmer's laugh did not ring so true as was its wont, and when the merriment had died away, he spoke gravely and with a grave look upon his face.

"Eh, but, mates," he said, "moy moind's sore troubled thinkin' on t' squire. Such ups and downs as he's had this mony a year back! Heart-broke along o' the bank robbery; heart-broke for each one on us as though it were for hisself—aye, and were too; raised oop to riches and greatness as a body may say, set i' the shoes o' them as were once great theirsens; and now, woife and choilt gone like shadders, and him a lonely suff'rin' man, laid so low that there's not one of us po'r 'umble chaps but is better off this day. Aye, lads, but

it's a sorry tale, and the ways o' the Lord is past findin' out!"

"Yo' may say that," chimed in Jeremy, "for wheer would yo' find a tenderer 'art than yon that's well-nigh broke? It often ha' seemed to me there ain't a flower or a burd but what Squire Stirling loves it. To see how tender he is a-handling the leastest blossom, and to see him feedin' the burdies when t' frost pinches 'em! All loves him, and none fears him—that's the pattern o' mon t' squire is."

There was a little silence after this, broken only by the whistling of breath through many pipes, and the sough of the wind in the big thorn-tree that stretched its long branches above the porch outside.

"I never think of Maister Ralph wi'out feelin' for all the world as if I'd swallowed my own last," said Jake presently.

He spoke softly, as we all are wont to speak of the dead, tenderly as it behoves us all to speak; and heads were nodded, pipes and all, in a universal assurance of sympathy.

"It fair comes over me to believe the thing," said the farmer; "he were so bright and bonny, he'd such a laughing eye, such a cheery way wi' him."

"Aye, the father's own son, every inch of him. When he looked at you, your 'art were drawed out o' your bress," said old Hawthorne. "Why when my missus were sick last autumn was a twelvemonth, down he come on that there pony of his, and a bottle-neck stickin' out of each of 's pockets. 'Here's stuff to mend the missus, Matthew!' says he, and sure enoo' 'twere some port-wine as had belonged to t' ould squire and be'n in the Dale End cellars sin' Lord knows when. Eh, my, my! but to think he's gone fair caps me—so it does."

"They say t' squire never spoke nor stirred for more nor three days after they got him leein' on t' floor like a dead mon, wi' t' ould dog keenin' over him fit to break yer 'art to hear," said Jake with an apologetic glance at Mr. Bindwhistle as to one who was doubtless more intimately conversant with the state of family matters at the Dale than anyone else present.

Jeremy accepted the situation with a dignified nod, taking up his parable with readiness.

"For once folk say true. T' squire never spoke nor stirred for three whole days; on'y mean't a bit now and agen, and drawed his breath 'eavy, same as tho'

each breath were a sigh. Then 'er perked up a bit, looked about 'un, and asked if Maister Ralph wur whoam? Yo' may say that wur a poser for all concerned. Well, the vicar he up and said as how the young master weren't arrove yet, at which Squire Stirling turn't his face to t' waa' and said, 'It's on'y a little more waitin';' which didn't mend matters for them as stood by wi' their hearts i' their mouths."

"No more it didn't," said the farmer, with a guttural gruffness that was the outcome of suppressed emotion.

"Tak' it a'together," continued Jeremy, "Dr. Turtle is of a mind to look upon things as better than he expected, for t' squire's limbs ain't so dead-alive as they wur, and he don't seem so dazed i' the yed, but he needs a deal o' watchin', and they're fair wore out, to say nothing of Nurse Prettyman settin' up a quinsy on her own account. Then the boy Davey has had to set out down south and mak' enquiries about that missin' ship, which, as is reported, went down wi' all hands in the gale as swep' our coast wi' its tail-end on Christmas Eve, and went near to suck down a brig as had sighted her, and tried to make for her, but was drove to sheer off."

"As I hear," put in the farmer at this point of Jeremy's narrative, "Gabriel Devenant's widow has gone oop to Dale End to give a hand wi' the nurse-tendin', and, as I'm told, she's a dab at such-like work."

"I wur comin' to that," said Jeremy, aggrieved. "I wur workin' my way round to that, neighbour, if yo hadn't ta'ent' words out o' my mouth."

"She's a fine figure of a woman is Mrs. Hester Devenant," said Amos Calender, with the air of one who is a judge in such matters; "but I'm not so sure she's one as I'd care to have a watchin' of me when I was laid low. There's a deal too much of the Siserrer about her for that job to my mind."

"What art 'ee drivin' at?" said the farmer, his face broadening to a grin.

"Her as wur so handy wi' t' joiner's tools as some fule had lef' lying handy," replied Amos sententially.

"Well, if she hit the reet nail on t' yed, thee hasn't," laughed the farmer. "'Tis Jael yo' mean, mon, and a rare bad wench she were, too, in my opinion, full o' deceit and liea. I'd fain hope she as has gone to watch by Squire Stirling ain't fashioned after such a sorry pattern. It

says summat for Hester Devenant that she took upon hersel' a charitable office."

"They say," persisted Jake (who had no mind to lose his reputation as the best-informed gossip in Becklington), "that she went to the vicar and entreated, even with sighin' and tears, to be let tak' a hand in a' the watchin' and tendin' up at the great house, so that he hadn't the heart to say her nay. I'm told that her own daughter spoke up for her and said how marvellous well she nursed an old Frenchman years ago, and how he couldn't abide her out o' his sight—and that's how the thing came about."

"She's not one given to much sighin' and tears isn't Hester Devenant, all the same," said the farmer; "I mind well meetin' her the very night as po'r Gabriel put hisself away, and her eyes were dry—aye, an' bright too—though she were sore beset, as ony mon might see; pale as yon ghost we wot of, and wi' her honds twistin' and turnin' and squeegein' one in the other like livin' critturs in pain. She's lived a lonesome life has Hester Devenant, and kep' the world at arm's-length, as the sayin' goes; but she's come out o' hersen at last and done a good deed, for the vicar's lady is sick and Nurse Prettyman laid by, and it really wants a female kind, and no mistake, to see to a sick man; while, as to paid nurses, they ain't good for much, bein' fuller of thought for their own stommicks among strange victuals, than for the sick and sufferin' given over to their care."

Assuredly no lighter-handed, softer-footed nurse ever held sway in a sick-room than Hester Devenant—at least, such was the verdict of Dale End. It seemed as if all hardness, all coldness of character had dropped from her like a mere husk or garment as she crossed the threshold of Geoffrey Stirling's room.

Cuthbert Deane, eager to make reparation for all past injustice towards her, went almost joyfully home to tell his spouse of this pearl of price that had been found, this quiet helpful woman who had come forward to lend her aid.

"The whole place seemed to change—the room and everything in it. She has such a gift of orderly management as I never saw equalled," said the vicar with enthusiasm. "Turtle was delighted with the intelligent way in which she grasped the case; and I am glad to be able to come home to you to-night, for you are very sadly, my poor Alicia!"

His poor Alicia, having taken a violent cold, had no voice, or only the husky remnant of a voice to answer him with; but, even making all allowances, he could not forbear the reflection that illness makes even the sweetest natures more or less petulant, for Alicia showed little warmth of interest in the story of Mrs. Devenant's excellent qualities as a nurse, and even drew her hand somewhat abruptly from her husband's as he enlarged upon the theme.

"I am sorry she is there—sorry she has got into the house at all. I am very wicked, I dare say, Cuthbert, but I thoroughly distrust her, and—I love the squire. Yes, you see I do not mind calling him by the dear old name. He has been so good to me—so good to me!"

Here Alicia's hoarse utterances began to break into sobs, and her husband could think of nothing better to do than draw the poor aching head upon his shoulder, and smooth the ruffled hair gently with loving fingers.

"Nobody liked Mrs. Devenant less than you, at one time," persisted Mrs. Alice, taking kindly enough to the position assigned her, but determined to have her say, nevertheless.

"I know," returned the vicar sadly; "but it was an unjust prejudice, and I set it aside as soon as I recognised it to be such."

"It wasn't, it was an instinct—it was true—like the instinct that prompted you to go up to Dale End ever so late on New Year's night, and brought you to poor Davey's aid when he needed you so sorely. I believe in instinct; and I tell you I instinctively distrust that woman, and feel—yes, dear Cuthbert, know—that there is something strange about her, something bitter and terrible, held down, if you will, kept in check, but still there."

"Was Hilda here to-night?" were the vicar's next words.

"Yes; I wanted her to stay, being alone; but she would not; she said she was restless, and would rather spend the night at home. Hilda has grown very fond of the White House; she says she loves to listen to the sound of the river as she lies awake."

"She is a strange child."

"Hardly a child, Cuthbert, now. Hilda is fast growing into a woman; in heart and mind she is older than her years; but you are right, dear—she is strange, more especially of late."

"How so?"

"There is a kind of fear over her. I cannot tell of what. Sometimes I fancy

she does not know herself—sometimes I fancy it is fear of one with whom perfect love should make fear impossible.”

“Her mother?”

“Who else should it be?”

“Dear wife, you are full of prejudice—a prejudice that I, alas! helped to build up—full of a sick woman’s fancies, too, to-night.”

Truly it seemed so, for at that very hour, had anyone glanced through the windows of the “squire’s rooms” at Dale End, they might well have thought Hester Devenant no poor representative of woman in the character of a “ministering angel.”

Her soft clinging robe made no rustle; the black lace that coiled her beautiful head suggested nothing less than the soothing idea of a sister of mercy. Long since her shapely hands had acquired a softness and fairness that betrayed no trace of the homely toil of earlier days. The farmer’s daughter might have been a duchess for any signs of rustic origin that clung to her nowadays.

She stood opposite the tall narrow mirror in which Geoffrey Stirling had seen his own death-stricken face reflected. One hand rested on the narrow shelf, the other lay in the strong grasp of Davey’s. Davey—worn and weary with long and hurried journeying—worn and worn, too, with fruitless searchings into the fate of the ill-starred Aladdin.

If one faint ray of hope had ever shone, that hope was gone.

Should Geoffrey Stirling awake to the reality of all things—should that mist of confused thought that now veiled his senses clear away—should he ask if any tidings of his son had reached the ears of those about him, no answer was possible save that all had been done that could be done, and that naught was of any avail.

“That is what Dr. Turtle fears,” said Mrs. Devenant; “his waking once more to the fresh knowledge of his loss——”

“But you,” said Davey eagerly, “you

think more hopefully? You have fewer fears?”

“My opinion does not count for much.”

“With me it does. You are always, have always been so wise; you must know better than the rest; and do you think, dear Mrs. Devenant, that my master may yet be restored to us?”

He trembled with eagerness as he spoke. He had travelled far. Forgetful of his physical needs in the intensity of anxiety that possessed his soul, he had eaten little. Now the strain began to tell.

He sank wearily into Geoffrey Stirling’s chair, laying his head back and looking wistfully up to Hester.

“Davey,” she said, and her pale face lighted up with that wonderful smile that had set Gabriel Devenant’s heart beating in the old days, “you are tired out. Fancy—just for this once—that I am your mother, and you a child bound to obey. Go and rest. Ask me no more questions. To-morrow will be time enough to talk these matters over. You leave your master in safe hands. You may take your fill of sleep. Do as I tell you, boy.”

With the last word, Hester bent her tall head suddenly, and just touched with her lips the broad brow from which Davey’s fair locks fell back.

He caught her hand, pressing it to his heart, his lips.

“Yes,” he said, “yes; let me call you mother. I, who have never known a mother’s love, shall know it henceforth and for ever, and Hilda——”

But a hand was laid upon his mouth, stifling his words.

“See,” said Hester, “the door is ajar; he hears you, and is stirring. Go!”

“One word,” he whispered. “It is beautiful to find you here, doing a beautiful work. Good-night, mother!”

Again he would have caught her hand, but she waved him back; and so, softly, for fear of disturbing the sick man, he went to seek the rest which he so sorely needed.

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLVI. M. GRASCOUR.

M. GRASCOUR was a Belgian about forty years old, who looked as though he were no more than thirty, except that his hair was in patches beginning to be a little grey. He was in the government service of his country, well educated, and thoroughly a gentleman. As is the case with many Belgians, he would have been taken to be an Englishman were his country not known. He had dressed himself in English mirrors, living mostly with the English. He spoke English so well that he would only be known to be a foreigner by the correctness of his language. He was a man of singularly good temper, and there was running, through all that he did, somewhat of a chivalric spirit which came from study rather than nature. He had looked into things and seen whether they were good, or at any rate popular, and endeavoured to grasp and to make his own whatever he found to be so. He was hitherto unmarried, and was regarded generally by his friends as a non-marrying man. But Florence Mountjoy was powerful over him, and he set to work to make her his wife.

He was intimate at the house of Sir Magnus, and saw, no doubt, that Anderson was doing the same thing. But he saw also that Anderson did not succeed. He had told himself from the first that if Anderson did succeed, he would not wish to do so. The girl who would be satisfied with Anderson would hardly content him. He remained therefore quiet till he saw that Anderson had failed. The young man at once took to an altered mode of life which was sufficiently marked. He went, like

Sir Proteus, ungartered. Everything about him had of late "demonstrated a careless desolation." All this M. Grascour observed, and, when he saw it, he felt that his own time had come.

He took occasion at first to wait upon Lady Mountjoy. He believed that to be the proper way of going to work. He was very intimate with the Mountjoys, and was aware that his circumstances were known to them. There was no reason, on the score of money, why he should not marry the niece of Sir Magnus. He had already shown some attention to Florence, which, though it had excited no suspicion in her mind, had been seen and understood by her aunt. And it had been understood also by Mr. Anderson. "That accursed Belgian! If, after all, she should take up with him! I shall tell her a bit of my mind if anything of that kind should occur."

"My niece, M. Grascour!"

"Yes, my lady." M. Grascour had not quite got over the way of calling Lady Mountjoy, "my lady." "It is presumption, I know."

"Not at all."

"I have not spoken to her. Nor would I do so till I had first addressed myself to you or to her mother. May I speak to Mrs. Mountjoy?"

"Oh, certainly. I do not in the least know what the young lady's ideas are. She has been much admired here and elsewhere, and that may have turned her head."

"I think not."

"You may be the better judge, M. Grascour."

"I think that Miss Mountjoy's head has not been turned by any admiration. She does not appear to be a young lady whose head would easily be turned. It is her

heart of which I am thinking." The interview ended by Lady Mountjoy passing the Belgian lover on to Mrs. Mountjoy.

"Florence!" said Mrs. Mountjoy.

"Yes, Mrs. Mountjoy;—I have the great honour of asking your permission. I am well known to Sir Magnus and Lady Mountjoy, and they can tell what are my circumstances. I am forty years of age."

"Oh yes; everything is, I am sure, quite as it should be. But my daughter thinks about these things for herself." Then there was a pause, and M. Grascour was about to leave the room, having obtained the permission he desired, when Mrs. Mountjoy thought it well to acquaint him with something of her daughter's condition. "I ought to tell you that my daughter has been engaged."

"Indeed!"

"Yes;—and I hardly know how to explain the circumstances. I should say that she had been promised to her cousin, Captain Scarborough; but to this she will not give her assent. She has since met a gentleman, Mr. Annesley, for whom she professes an attachment. Neither can I, nor can her uncle and aunt, hear of Mr. Annesley as a husband for Florence. She is therefore at present disengaged. If you can gain her affections, you have my leave." With this permission M. Grascour departed, professing himself to be contented.

He did not see Florence for two or three days, no doubt leaving the matter to be discussed with her by her mother and her aunt. To him it was quite indifferent what might be the fate of Captain Scarborough, or of Mr. Annesley, or indeed of Mr. Anderson. And, to tell the truth, he was not under any violent fear or hope as to his own fate. He admired Miss Mountjoy, and thought it would be well to secure for a wife such a girl with such a fortune as would belong to her. But he did not intend to go "ungartered," nor yet to assume an air of "desolation." If she would come to him, it would be well; if she would not,—why, it would still be well. The only outward difference made by his love was that he brushed his clothes and his hair a little more carefully, and had his boots brought to a higher state of polish than was usual.

Her mother spoke to her first. "My dear, M. Grascour is a most excellent man."

"I am sure he is, mamma."

"And he is a great friend to your uncle and Lady Mountjoy."

"Why do you say this, mamma? What can it matter to me?"

"My dear, M. Grascour wishes you to—to become his wife."

"Oh, mamma, why didn't you tell him that it is impossible?"

"How was I to know, my dear?"

"Mamma, I am engaged to marry Harry Annesley, and no word shall ever turn me from that purpose, unless it be spoken by himself. The crier may say that all round the town if he wishes. You must know that it is so. What can be the use of sending M. Grascour or any other gentleman to me? It is only giving me pain and him too. I wish, mamma, you could be got to understand this." But Mrs. Mountjoy could not altogether be got as yet to understand the obstinacy of her daughter's character.

There was one point on which Florence received information from these two suitors who had come to her at Brussels. They were both favoured, one after the other, by her mother; and would not have been so favoured had her mother absolutely believed in Captain Mountjoy. It seemed to her as though her mother would be willing that she should marry anyone, so long as it was not Harry Annesley. "It is a pity that there should be such a difference," she said to herself. "But we will see what firmness can do."

Then Lady Mountjoy spoke to her. "You have heard of M. Grascour, my dear?"

"Yes; I have heard of him, aunt."

"He intends to do you the honour of asking you to be his wife."

"So mamma tells me."

"I have only to say that he is a man most highly esteemed here. He is well known at the Court; and is at the royal parties. Should you become his wife, you would have all the society of Brussels at your feet."

"All the society of Brussels would do no good."

"Perhaps not."

"Nor the Court and the Royal parties."

"If you choose to be impertinent when I tell you what are his advantages and condition in life, I cannot help it."

"I do not mean to be impertinent."

"What you say about the Royal parties and the Court is intended for impertinence, knowing as you do know your uncle's position."

"Not at all. You know my position. I am engaged to marry another man, and

cannot therefore marry M. Grascour. Why should he be sent to me, except that you won't believe me when I tell you that I am engaged?" Then she marched out of the room, and considered within her own bosom what answer she would give to this new Belgian suitor.

She was made perfectly aware when the Belgian suitor was about to arrive. On the day but one after the interview with her aunt, she was left alone when the other ladies went out, and suspected that even the footmen knew what was to happen, when M. Grascour was shown into the drawing-room. There was a simple mode of dealing with the matter on his part—very different from that state of agitation into which Harry had been thrown when he had made his proposition. She was quite prepared to admit that M. Grascour's plan might be the wisest. But Harry's manner had been full of real love, and had charmed her. M. Grascour was not in the least flustered, whereas poor Harry had been hardly able to speak his mind. But it had not mattered much whether Harry spoke his mind or not; whereas all the eloquence in the world could have done no good for M. Grascour. Florence had known that Harry did love her, whereas of M. Grascour she only knew that he wanted to make her his wife.

"Miss Mountjoy," he said, "I am charmed to find you here. Allow me to add that I am charmed to find you alone." Florence, who knew all about it, only bowed. She had to go through it, and thought that she would be able to do so with equanimity. "I do not know whether your aunt or your mother have done me the honour of mentioning my name to you."

"They have both spoken to me."

"I thought it best that they should have the opportunity of doing so. In our country these things are arranged chiefly by the lady's friends. With your people I know it is different. Perhaps it is much better that it should be so in a matter in which the heart has to be concerned."

"It would come to the same thing with me. I must decide for myself."

"I am sure of it. May I venture to feel a hope that ultimately that decision may not go against me?" M. Grascour as he said this did throw some look of passion into his face. "But I have spoken nothing as yet of my own feelings."

"It is unnecessary."

This might be taken in either one of

two senses; but the gentleman was not sufficiently vain to think that the lady had intended to signify to him that she would accept his love as a thing of which she could have no doubt. "Ah! Miss Mountjoy," he continued, "if you would allow me to say that since you have been at Brussels not a day has passed in which mingled love and respect have not grown within my bosom. I have sat by and watched while my excellent young friend Mr. Anderson has endeavoured to express his feelings. I have said to myself that I would bide my time. If you could give yourself to him,—why then the aspiration should be quenched within my own breast. But you have not done so; though, as I am aware, he has been assisted by my friend Sir Magnus. I have seen and have heard and have said to myself at last, 'Now, too, my turn may come.' I have loved much, but I have been very patient. Can it be that my turn should have come at last?" Though he had spoken of Mr. Anderson, he had not thought it expedient to say a word either of Captain Scarborough or of Mr. Annesley. He knew quite as much of them as he did of Mr. Anderson. He was clever, and had put together with absolute correctness what Mrs. Mountjoy had told him; with other little facts which had reached his ears.

"M. Grascour, I suppose I am very much obliged to you. I ought to be." Here he bowed his head. "But my only way of being grateful is to tell you the truth." Again he bowed his head. "I am in love with another man. That's the truth." Here he shook his head with the smallest possible shake, as though deprecating her love, but not doing so with any harshness. "I am engaged to marry him too." There was another shake of the head, somewhat more powerful. "And I intend to marry him." This she said with much bold assurance. "All my old friends know that it is so, and ought not to have sent you to me. I have given a promise to Harry Annesley, and Harry Annesley alone can make me depart from it." This she said in a low voice, but almost with violence, because there had come another shake of the head in reply to her assurance that she meant to marry Annesley. "And though he were to make me depart from it,—which he never will do,—I should be just the same as regards anybody else. Can't you understand that when a girl has given herself heart and soul to a man, she won't change?"

"Girls do change—sometimes."

"You may know them, I don't;—not girls that are worth anything."

"But when all your friends are hostile?"

"What can they do? They can't make me marry another person. They may hinder my happiness; but they can't hand me over like a parcel of goods to any one else. Do you mean to say that you would accept such a parcel of goods?"

"Oh yes;—such a parcel!"

"You would accept a girl who would come to you telling you that she loved another man? I don't believe it of you."

"I should know that my tenderness would beget tenderness in you."

"It wouldn't do anything of the kind. It would be all horror,—horror. I should kill myself,—or else you,—or perhaps both."

"Is your aversion so strong?"

"No; not at all; not at present. I like you very much. I do indeed. I'd do anything for you,—in the way of friendship. I believe you to be a real gentleman."

"But you would kill me!"

"You make me talk of a condition of things which is quite, quite impossible. When I say that I like you, I am talking of the present condition of things. I have not the least desire to kill you, or myself, or anybody. I want to be taken back to England, and there to be allowed to marry Mr. Henry Annesley. That's what I want. But I intend to remain engaged to him. That's my purpose. And no man and no woman shall stir me from it." He smiled and again shook his head, and she began to doubt whether she did like him so much. "Now I've told you all about myself," she said, rising to her feet. "You may believe me or not as you please; but as I have believed you, I have told you all." Then she walked out of the room.

M. Grascour, as soon as he was alone, left the room and the house, and making his way into the park, walked round it twice, turning in his mind his success and his want of success. For in truth he was not at all dispirited by what had occurred. With her other Belgian lover,—that is, with Mr. Anderson,—Florence had at any rate succeeded in making the truth appear to be the truth. He did believe that she had taken such a fancy to that "fellow, Harry Annesley," that there would be no overcoming it. He had got a glimpse into the firmness of her character which

was denied to M. Grascour. M. Grascour, as he walked up and down the shady paths of the park, told himself that such events as this so-called love on the part of Florence were very common in the lives of English young ladies. "They are the best in the world," he said to himself, "and they make the most charming wives. But their education is such that there is no preventing these accidents." The passion displayed in the young lady's words he attributed solely to her power of expression. One girl would use language such as had been hers, and such a girl would be clever, eloquent, and brave; another girl would hum and haw with half a "yes" and a quarter of a "no," and would mean just the same thing. He did not doubt but that she had engaged herself to Harry Annesley; nor did he doubt that she had been brought to Brussels to break off that engagement;—and he thought it most probable that her friends would prevail. Under these circumstances, why should he despair;—or why, rather, as he was a man not given to despair, should he not think that there was for him a reasonable chance of success? He must show himself to be devoted, true, and not easily repressed. She had used, he did not doubt, the same sort of language in silencing Anderson. Mr. Anderson had accepted her words; but he knew too well the value of words coming from a young lady's mouth to take them at their true meaning. He had at this interview affected a certain amount of intimacy with Florence of which he thought that he appreciated the value. She had told him that she would kill him,—of course in joke; and a joke from a girl on such an occasion was worth much. No Belgian girl would have joked. But then he was anxious to marry Florence because Florence was English. Therefore, when he went back to his own home, he directed that the system of the high polish should be continued with his boots.

"I don't suppose he will come again," Florence had said to her mother, misunderstanding the character of her latest lover quite as widely as he misunderstood hers. But M. Grascour, though he did not absolutely renew his offer at once, gave it to be understood that he did not at all withdraw from the contest. He obtained permission from Lady Mountjoy to be constantly at the Embassy; and succeeded even in obtaining a promise of support from Sir Magnus. "You're quite up a tree," Sir

Magnus had said to his Secretary of Legation. "It's clear she won't look at you."

"I have pledged myself to abstain," said poor Anderson in a tone which seemed to confess that all chance was over with him.

"I suppose she must marry some one, and I don't see why Grascour should not have as good a chance as another." Anderson had stalked away brooding over the injustice of his position, and declaring to himself that this Belgian should never be allowed to marry Florence Mountjoy in peace.

But M. Grascour continued his attentions; and this it was which had induced Florence to tell her mother that the Belgian was "a great trouble," which ought to be avoided by a return to England.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

NORTHUMBERLAND. PART II.

THE home of the Percys themselves is not far distant from Warkworth, and to see the proud towers of Alnwick Castle dominating valley and town, gives a lively impression of the still surviving state of the remnant of the old feudal nobility; and although in the main a modern restoration, there is still left a sufficient kernel of antiquity to flavour the whole. Perhaps no crowned head even has a statelier home than this, that recalls the memories of the proud feudatories whose power for long was paramount in this north country. But Alnwick has a history anterior even to the Percys. A column in the grounds of the castle marks the traditional spot where King Malcolm of Scotland was slain with his eldest son—the king whose wife was the saintly Margaret, the niece of the Confessor. The slayer of the king, another tradition has it, was called Pierce eye, or Percy, from having pierced the king through the eye with his spear; only unfortunately it can be shown that Percy, near St. Lô, in Normandy, gave the family its name. Another Scotch king—William the Lion—came to grief at Alnwick, being taken prisoner during a raid, although it seems by no means clear that he was not there of good right as Earl of Northumberland, a title which the kings of Scotland then claimed. Indeed, up to the reign of Edward the First, there was no distinct division between Northumberland and the Lothians, so that it seemed equally likely that Northumberland would finally belong

to Scotland or the Lothians gravitate to England. Anyhow, we do not hear much of the Percys till the reign of Edward the Third, when the head of the family purchased the castle and barony of Alnwick of the then Bishop of Durham, who in his turn had received it from the last of the De Vesey family—it is supposed, in secret trust for the illegitimate son of the latter.

According to family history, however, before that date the original family of Percy had become merged in a more distinguished line, by the marriage of its heiress to Joceline de Lorraine, son of the Duke of Brabant, who assumed the name and arms of Percy; and this genealogy may account in some manner for the aspiring ambition of the family, as well as the constant jealousy of the crown. Anyhow, the family grew and increased in power and possessions, gaining, by marriage and gift, many castles and lordships, among others Warkworth, once held by the Claverings. And this brings us to times and characters already familiar through Shakespeare—Henry, the first Earl of Northumberland and Warden of the Marches, created such at the coronation of Richard the Second; and with the earl his more famous son Hotspur. The earl held the borders as a man of might, and proved himself a skilful warrior and prudent leader; but his growing power excited the jealousy of the court. John of Gaunt, it is said, was his bitter enemy, having himself tried his hand against the Scotch with little credit; and to the influence of time-honoured Lancaster Northumberland owed it that on the occasion of the Scots obtaining possession of Berwick Castle by bribing the earl's lieutenant, he was impeached in his absence, and condemned to death and forfeiture.

The wily earl, however, was not to be touched in the centre of his own earldom. The headsman's axe could not reach so far as that. And presently Northumberland contrived to make his peace with Richard. But he had received a warning, and felt that he could not trust the capricious temper of the king, and in sinking his quarrel with the Prince of Lancaster, and espousing the cause of Bolingbroke, his enemy's son, no doubt Northumberland thought to secure safety for himself and a position scarcely inferior to a king's. But Bolingbroke once firmly seated on the throne as Henry the Fourth, the old jealousy revived of the earl as too powerful for a subject. On the other hand

the Percys had to complain that while they were put to enormous charges to keep up the force requisite for the protection of the borders, the king withheld all the subsidies he had promised—the earl, it seems, contracted to defend the borders for four thousand pounds a year, which was never paid him.

At this moment, indeed, the power of the Percys in the north seemed overwhelming. Hotspur held Berwick and the East Marches with three hundred men-at-arms and six hundred archers. The earl himself had command of Carlisle and the West Marches with two hundred men-at-arms and four hundred archers, such a nucleus of an army as the king could not show. Then the Percys held on their own account the castles of Alnwick, Warkworth, Prudhoe, and Cockermouth; while the other garrisons in the north, Roxburgh, Harbottle, Jedworth, and Norham, were held by men more engaged to the earl than to the king.

We all know the pretext for the contest which seems to have been then inevitable—the Scotch prisoners taken by Hotspur, and demanded by the king.

It was the old kingdom of Northumberland that the Percys fought to hold and keep, the England north of the Trent which still retains a certain distinct character of its own. But the stars fought against them, and soon came the news from Shrewsbury how the rebellion had bad luck:

And that young Harry Percy's spur was cold.

A short two years after that the earl himself had fallen, his head, white with age, was struck off and fixed on London Bridge, and with him departed the prestige and independent power of the earls and lords marchers of the borders. But some interest may be felt in the fate of Hotspur's son, who had been left by his grandfather in the care of the Scottish court. Young Percy, it is said, accompanied Prince James on his voyage to France, and was taken prisoner with him, and for a time shared his captivity in the Tower, where the young prince, it will be remembered, turned his captivity to account in making verses and in making love. But Henry the Fifth, who was not wanting in generosity, restored the young Percy to estate and honours. The ballad, indeed, of Warkworth Hermitage gives a different account of the matter, telling how young Percy in disguise of a shepherd revisits Northumberland, and taking service with some noble

family, falls in love with the beautiful daughter of the house. She reciprocates his passion, and they fly together and take refuge with the Hermit of Warkworth, who tells his sad tale; and then recognising the Percy in the shepherd, unites the pair with the benediction of the Church. Anyhow, the story ends happily with general reconciliation and rejoicing.

The king's generosity was repaid by the unswerving devotion of the Percys to the house of Lancaster. Our Henry the Exile was killed at St. Albans fighting for the Red Rose. His son was slain at Towton in the same cause. The next in the line, too young to take part in the Wars of the Roses, was treated with great favour by Edward the Fourth, and appeared at Bosworth field on the side of Richard. But it is said that he refused to fight against the house of Lancaster. At all events he was at once taken into favour by Henry the Seventh, but perished ingloriously—stoned to death by Yorkshire tykes who had risen against a newly-imposed tax.

In the succeeding earl we have a nobleman of the new type, a grand and magnificent person rather of the ceremonial and spectacular order, than the fighting far-sighted feudatory of old. He has his officer of arms, his Northumberland herald, and assumes the splendour of a great prince. He flashes in the eyes of the poor nobles of the Scottish court with quite dazzling brilliancy when he brings the daughter of his master, the Princess Margaret, to her husband, the doomed one of Flodden. And whereas there never was a Battle in the old days on border side, but a Percy was in the thick of it, the magnificent earl is now riding after the king at the Battle of Spurs or sunning himself in the Field of the Cloth of Gold, while Surrey is winning Flodden Field. And so he dies in his bed of gold arras, and is buried in the minster at Beverley, perhaps the last of the race to be interred in the splendour of the ancient rites; with a chantry chapel to himself and mass-priests singing daily for the repose of his soul.

Not long do the mass-priests sing, however, for the Reformation is now upon us, and the new earl is the lover of Anne Boleyn, ardent in that, but lukewarm seemingly about all other things, while old Northumbria is shaken to its core, and the people are rising everywhere for the old faith. But Sir Thomas Percy, the earl's brother, rides out with the rebels

on their pilgrimage of grace, and loses his head and his lands in the good old gallant way. And thus when Earl Henry dies without children, the succession of his nephews is barred by their father's treason, and the earldom comes for a time to an end. And in the place of the ancient house comes a then parvenu Dudley, who shines for a while as Duke of Northumberland, and then perishes on the scaffold with his daughter-in-law, the unhappy Lady Jane Grey.

As the Catholic zeal of the younger branches of Percys was not at all displeasing to Queen Mary, we find in her reign Sir Thomas's son restored to all the family estates and honours—an earl who took to border warfare like his ancestors, fights the Scots and beats them, but fell on evil days in Queen Elizabeth's reign, was implicated in the northern Catholic conspiracy, and was beheaded at York. His brother had remained loyal, and thus succeeded to the earldom, but he was supposed to have been gained over by the charms and wiles of Mary of Scots, and was sent to the Tower where he died mysteriously, shot by some unknown hand. In his son we have another type of nobleman, "the generous favourer of all good learning," as he is described in the literature of the day, a volunteer with Howard against the Armada, but in the next reign accused of participation in the Gunpowder Plot, and imprisoned in the Tower for fifteen years, where with Raleigh for an associate, and the society of his literary friends and pensioners, perhaps he was as well off as at Alnwick. Then there came an Algernon, who passed safely through the troubles of the civil wars, inclining to the Parliament, but not taking an active part on either side, and with his successor, Jocelyn, who died at Turin in 1670, the long line of Percys, Earls of Northumberland, came to an end. Jocelyn left but one daughter, heiress to all the Northumberland estates and honours. At his death the estates and titles were claimed by one James Percy, a trunk-maker of Dublin, but his claims, whatever they may have been, were quickly snuffed out by the judges.

Already for several generations the Percys had neglected a good deal their ancient seats and castles in the north. Petworth in Sussex had for some time been their favourite residence, and the fine old castle of Alnwick gradually fell to decay. The young heiress of the Percys meantime

was the object of all kinds of matrimonial attempts, and the chronicles of the period relate with some aplomb how she was thrice a wife and thrice a widow before the age of sixteen. Her first husband was Henry Cavendish, who died a few months after the marriage. With the least possible delay she was again contracted to Thomas Thynne of Longleat, who was murdered by Königsmark, who had some desperate notion of winning the marvellous prize at the point of the sword. Lastly the poor girl was bestowed on Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, a man ridiculous for an overweening pride and ostentation. It is related of this proud duke that when his second duchess tapped him fondly on the shoulder with her fan, he turned round haughtily, and said: "Madam, my first lady was a Percy, and she never took such a liberty." The new line of Percy-Seymour lasted not long—the son of this union, indeed, succeeded to the dukedom and earldom, but left only a daughter and heiress, who married Sir Hugh Smithson, a physician, created Duke of Northumberland, whose descendants have since reigned at Alnwick.

When the new duke and duchess took possession of the castle in 1750 it was little better than a heap of ruins, but from that date its restoration was carried on, often with more zeal than discretion, but in the best Gothic that Strawberry Hill could find a model for. In recent years the further restoration has been one of the great works of the Gothic revival. In November, 1854, the foundation-stone of Prudhoe Tower, one of the grandest in the building, was laid by Duchess Eleanor; and now, with its grand display of feudal magnificence, Alnwick may hold its own with any castellated building of ancient or modern days.

Within the grounds of Alnwick Castle, but some few miles higher up the river, are the remains of Hulne Abbey on a grassy eminence, of no great importance in themselves, but interesting from the story attached to their origin. Two Crusaders from Northumberland, De Vesey, then Lord of Alnwick, and Grey, an ancestor of the present existing family, on making a pilgrimage to the monastery of Mount Carmel, found among the brethren an old companion in arms, one Fresborn, out of Northumberland, and persuaded him to return with them and found a miniature Mount Carmel in England. The abbey thus founded was favoured by the succeeding

lords of the castle, and some of the items of the grants from the Percys are curious, as indicating a certain patriarchal simplicity among the frugal monks of the north, as, for instance, a grant of all wild bees, with their fruits of honey and wax, in Walse and in Hone, for the perpetual support of the light in their church, with a truss of conies at Easter and another at the Assumption, and rushes and broom to cover their houses.

So much has been said about the castle and its lords that there is hardly space to notice the neat little town of Alnwick, which is noteworthy for a curious old custom of ducking its apprentices in a certain pool hard-by the town—an unpleasant way of bestowing their “freedom” as burgesses, which is attributed as to its origin to a spiteful mandate of King John, but which is perhaps a survival of one of many grotesque usages of which schoolboys and sailors—as in crossing the Line—have preserved the memory in modified forms.

From Alnwick to Berwick-on-Tweed is a short and pleasant journey, passing along a coast that was once noted for smuggling, the precipitous cliffs and sequestered coves affording the requisite conditions. Bulmer, a little fishing-hamlet on the coast, was long famed for the quantity of Hollands gin landed there by foreign vessels. The railway crosses the Tweed on a fine elevated bridge, the view from which of river and sea and coast gives an agreeable impression of the surroundings of Berwick. The town itself is gay and pleasant, with ramparts dating from the reign of Elizabeth, but otherwise there is little to remind us that the place has been more fought about and battered than any other town in the three kingdoms. A solid volume might be—and, indeed, has been—occupied with the vicissitudes of its history, the battles and sieges it has known. Berwick in itself is a pleasant resting-place and a convenient station for reaching the celebrated scenes of border history. There is a branch line to Kelso, with a station some little way down that when announced by the north-country porter sets everyone repeating:

“Day set on Norham’s castled steep.”

And happily there is no disenchantment in the scene itself. A noble ruin nobly placed on the brink of a steep rock, whose base is washed by the Tweed’s fair river, broad and deep. A royal fortress once, and long deemed “the daungerest place in

England,” where watch and ward were kept by day and night. Here came the original Marmion, in bravado, to air his new helmet against the Scots, and had not long to wait for a desperate fight in which he nearly lost helmet and life together. The grand keep was built by some warlike Bishop of Durham, strange successor to the ascetic Cuthbert, as early as the twelfth century, and it was not until the union of the crowns under James that the garrison was finally withdrawn, and the fortress dismantled.

The rail follows the course of the Tweed, passing Twisel Castle and Tillmouth Priory, and the train stops at Coldstream—it should be rather Cornhill, for Coldstream is on the Scotch side of the Tweed; however, Coldstream or Cornhill, it is the nearest station—and we alight here for Flodden Field.

A wild bleak country this with occasional glimpses of verdure and loveliness as in Twisel Glen, not far from the junction of the Tweed and Till. It was this last deep and dangerous river that Surrey crossed on the morning of the battle, at Twisel Bridge, which still stands where it did. James was encamped on Flodden Hill hard-by, and watched the dangerous defile, irresolute, or, perhaps, in chivalrous folly, unwilling to attack his enemy at a disadvantage. The battle was fought on the plain between the hill and the river. Retreat was impossible on either side, and a fierce ding-dong fight was fought out till the death of the king and of the flower of his nobility put an end to the battle. A rough stone column, called the King’s Stone, commemorates the spot where James was killed.

Not far from Cornhill, a village famous for its spas or springs—a Harrogate of chiefly local fame—are the ruins of another famous border castle, as famous as Norham indeed, although the name of it—Wark—does not ring so pleasantly in rhyme. The castle, on a brow overlooking the Tweed, stands full face to Scotland. It would be tedious to tell how often the old castle was taken, and retaken, by Scots and English. But in the fourteenth century we find the castle held by the beautiful Countess of Salisbury for her husband—a man surely fortunate in beautiful wives, having married in the first instance the charming Joan of Kent, a marriage afterwards invalidated on the ground of a pre-contract on the part of the lady. The beautiful countess was brave as well, and fell upon

David Bruce, of Scotland, as he returned homewards from a raid into England, whereupon David turned fiercely upon the castle, and halting all his forces, set desperate siege to the place. The king himself, Edward the Third, came to the rescue of the countess, and compelled David to raise the siege, and there were then gallant feasts in the king's honour, and the monarch, it is said, drank deep draughts of love from the eyes of his lovely hostess. Froissart tells the story, and very much to the credit of the countess. But without doubt it was this same countess with whom occurred the celebrated garter incident, that led to the institution of that celebrated order of knighthood. After this episode, Wark was again and again demolished and reinstated. In the sixteenth century we have a siege of the castle by the Scots, described by an eye-witness, George Buchanan, the historian. In the centre, he informs us, was a tower of great height and strength, encircled by two walls. The outer court was of great extent, and afforded an asylum in time of war to the neighbouring inhabitants, who brought in their corn and cattle for protection.

Another border castle in the neighbourhood of Flodden is Ford, formerly held by the Herons. Lady Heron figures in Marmion as the syren who detained the king at Holyrood when he ought to have been in the field; but the fascination, if excited at all, must have been in the lady's own bower at Ford Castle, of which James had taken possession some time before Flodden was fought. Ford Castle, too, was the centre of a famous border feud in which the Herons disputed possession of their castle with the Carrs, one of whom had married the heiress of Ford. Most of the gentry of the country made common cause with the Herons and against the law, which was in favour of the other side. Feuds indeed were common enough all along the borders up to recent days, and a pugnacious borderer full of fight would hang up his glove in the church of the parish as a defiance to the neighbours generally. The castle of Ford is now replaced by an eighteenth-century mansion.

In the neighbourhood of Ford, and over above Flodden, is a curious summit known as Yevering Bell, with an oval camp on the summit, a city of refuge no doubt of high antiquity, forming one of a chain of such defences on the adjacent hills. Yevering is described by Baeda as Ad Gebrum, where

the king of Northumbria had a house, and in the valley below, upon the bank of the river Glen, it is said by the same authority that Paulinus baptised many thousands of heathen English. From the circuit of the old camp there is a fine bird's-eye view of a wide range of country in Scotland and Northumberland, with many a battle-field. Humbledon lies below, where Hotspur won his victory over the Scots, and under the short scanty turf are hidden the relics of countless unrecorded combats—a wild and savage scene stretching away among the lonely Cheviots.

Along the border here the gipsies at one time were settled in considerable numbers. The Faas, the Youngs, and the Gordens were the chief families, the aristocracy of the Romany race, among whom, no doubt, Walter Scott found his model for Meg Merrilies. But in the present day a gipsy of the pure blood as often as not is a well-to-do cattle-dealer or horse-dealer with an account at the local bank, and little to distinguish him from the rest, except a certain picturesque floridness of apparel and a sneaking fondness for prize-fighting, and horse-racing, and other congenial sports.

Allied with the gipsies were the smugglers of the border, trading chiefly in salt and whisky. A family of the name of Geggie, living near Wark, were noted practitioners in this line, and many stories are told of the hair-breadth escapes of the free-traders. On one occasion the most noted of the race, one Alley Geggie, was closely pursued by two excisemen to the banks of the Tweed, where there is a ferry. Marmion might have crossed by it instead of swimming the river, but perhaps the ferryman had absconded with the boat in dread of the Scots. However, the excisemen, hot upon the trail of their quarry, hurried down to the ferry and eagerly asked at the ferryman's cottage if such a one had been seen to cross. The reply was that such a man had just been kented over. The excisemen rushed to get on board, and the supposed ferryman, taking the kent or pole from the boat, shoved it into the middle of the stream with a shout of triumphant defiance. "Now, ye —— A'm Alley Geggie."

From the wild and desolate region between the Till and the Coquet, it is a relief to find an opening in the hills, and to descend into the pleasant cultivated glen of Rothbury. Close at hand is Harbottle Castle, connected with the Umfraville

and Tailbois families. The former, it is said, held the castle direct from the Conqueror on the tenure of keeping free Redesdale from thieves and wolves. During the Wars of the Roses the castle was forfeited to the crown, and at a later date we find it the residence of Margaret, the dowager Queen of Scotland, sister of Henry the Eighth, who had not long mourned her husband, slain at Flodden, but married with all possible speed Douglas, Earl of Angus. Here she gave birth to a daughter, Lady Mary Douglas, afterwards the mother of Darnley, and thus the ancestress of the Stuarts.

We are close to Redesdale now, indeed Harbottle is looked upon as the chief place in Redesdale, although actually upon the Coquet. A rude, wild race the men of Redesdale of old, and yet among them has cropped out a certain poetic vein. The original author of Chevy Chase, which is said to stir one like a trumpet, was probably a man of the dale, and the present century has produced a poet of considerable local reputation, known as the Bard of Redesdale. A famous family in the dale were the mad Halls of Otterburn, the last of whom died on Tyburn Tree, for his share in the rising of 1715. The lands of the Halls embraced the battle-field of Otterburne, where a Douglas was slain, and Hotspur taken prisoner, described by Froissart as one of the best-fought fields of his day, and which is the origin of the ballad Chevy Chase, although there was a battle actually of Chevy Chase fought half a century later.

Following the course of the Rede and of Northern Watling Street for part of the way, we come to the pleasant little town of Bellingham, placed among charming pastoral scenes at the junction of the Rede with the North Tyne. And now we are again in fair Tynedale, in a country fertile and luxuriant, with railways and modern influences all about us. And so following the course of the Tyne we come to the Roman Wall, the sight of which passing over field and fell, mountain and river, strikes one with a certain awe, with the memory of the great empire of which this was one of the acknowledged limits. Baeda describes the wall, as it existed in his day, as twelve feet high and eight in breadth, and at places now as much as six feet of masonry in height is still visible.

Of the builders of the wall, as of the wall itself, the traditions of the countryside have little to say. That giants built

it, or the enemy of mankind, is one account, but there is talk also of an old woman with an apron full of stones who was seen at nights—perhaps one of the dimly remembered deities of the old Norseland.

A little to the eastward of the point where the wall crosses the North Tyne is a little chapel dedicated to St. Oswald, the king and martyr, which is said to mark the site of the Battle of Heavensfield, where Oswald was victorious over the British hero Cadwallon. And a little further on we come in sight of the stately tower of Hexham Minster. A stately minster indeed for such a quiet stand-still place as Hexham, where population instead of growing is diminishing, but where people seem to live and thrive nevertheless. And the minster is only the transept and chancel with the central tower of the ancient priory church, whose nave and western towers have long since disappeared. The church, the remains of which are before us, was preceded by a cathedral, magnificent for the period at which it was built; Bishop Wilfrid, who founded it, having, it is said, brought over artificers from Rome to superintend the building of it. For some centuries Hexham was the seat of a bishopric, which was swept away by the Danes. The cathedral and monarchy perished in one fell conflagration, and the ruins remained in their desolation from the ninth century to the twelfth, when Thomas, Archbishop of York, passing thereby, "moved with the desolation of the church and ruins of its ancient magnificence and splendour, constituted here a Priory of regular Canons of St. Austin." Of the earlier minster the only remains existing are the foundations and a curious crypt, not easily accessible, of massive masonry, built of the stones of some earlier Roman edifice, with Roman inscriptions still to be made out on some of the stones.

Some of the veneration felt for the original building seems to have clung to the priory church of the archbishop. It had the privilege of sanctuary, and the frith-stool designed for the claimant of the privilege is still pointed out. And the attachment of the people, townsmen and tenants, to the brethren of the priory, was warm and devoted. At the dissolution the brethren of Hexham made a sturdy fight for their rights, not with spiritual weapons alone, but in harness, armed with bows and spears. At the approach of the king's commissioners, the alarm-bell was rung, and townsmen and farmers mustered in

warlike and threatening array. "We be twenty brethren in this house, and we shall die all or ye have this house," was the reply of the monks to the summons of the commissioners, a reply delivered from the battlements of the priory buildings.

The commissioners prudently retreated for the time, but returned with overwhelming force, and many of the rebellious monks were, by the king's express directions, "tied up"—that is, hanged—in front of their own porch.

From Hexham the way down the river-bank brings us to the junction of a small but pleasant stream called Devilswater. There is a vision of a high-arched bridge, soft trees, a rushing stream, over all a melancholy charm; and among its green glades the deserted mansion of the Derwentwaters. Here were Radcliffes of a good old Northumbrian stock, baronets since there were baronets in the land, and now connected in some way with both stage and crown by the marriage of the Sir Francis of that day with Lady Mary Tudor, daughter of Charles the Second and the actress familiarly known as Moll Davies. Hence the earldom of Derwentwater and a connection with the Stuart family in their exile.

When the standard of the Chevalier was raised in 1715, the then earl—albeit with many misgivings—left his lovely home, his wife and babes, and all the comfort and consideration of a man much loved by all the country round, to muster on the bleak hillside with a handful of well-mounted gentry and a score or two of serving-men mounted on their masters' coach-horses. Never more saw he the pleasant hall of Dilston; the journey thus begun ended a few months later on Tower Hill. There was much popular sympathy and sorrow in Northumberland when the hearse and four horses which bore the body of the earl, and which had travelled at full speed from London along the miry roads, brought its sad burden to the tomb. All along the way at night had been lighted by the flickerings of the aurora, and the people of Northumberland, connecting the then unusual portent with the fate of the earl, called them then and long after the Derwentwater Lights.

Another brother, Charles, who had taken part in the rising, escaped from Newgate, and thus lost the benefit of the amnesty which was not long after proclaimed. He lived an exile in France, and followed the young Pretender in his expedition in 1745, but

was captured at sea and afterwards executed on his former attainder. The Derwentwater estates were conferred upon Greenwich Hospital, and now they are under the auctioneer's hammer, and divided and parcelled out.

Close by Dilston, in the fork between stream and river, was fought the Battle of Hexham, the last effort made by the Red Rose in Northumberland, and local tradition preserves some trace of the event in a cave by the bank of the stream, near the bridge of Linnels, which is still called the Queen's Cave, and formed the refuge of Margaret, it is said, after the fatal battle. There, according to tradition, the queen and the young Prince Edward were sheltered by an outlaw, an episode familiar in the school-books of an earlier period—the robber in armour, with his long battle-axe, and the figure of the queen in a flowing veil confiding her son to his protection, are perhaps retained in the memory of a good many who have long ceased to be students of history.

Between Hexham and Newcastle the train stops at a small quiet station, Corbridge, which is worth taking note of as a well-authenticated Roman station upon ancient Watling Street. The place once returned members to Parliament, but nothing remains to show its former importance except that twice a year a fair is held in the neighbourhood, and not so long ago it was one of the principal cattle-fairs in the north of England. That in the time of King John there were traditions of buried treasure attached to Corbridge is evident by the fact that this monarch made considerable excavations in search of it without success. But the curious part of the matter is that there is little doubt the treasure was actually there, for in the last century a silver tray of Roman workmanship was discovered, which probably formed a part of the service of some magnate of the period—such a service as that called the treasure of Hildesheim, now in the museum of Berlin. Northumberland was, no doubt—perhaps still is—rich in such buried hoards. But a very small percentage of the finds have ever come to light. The absurd law which gave the whole of a recovered treasure to the lord of the manor has caused the destruction of many valuable relics.

One more castle—Prudhoe, finely placed on the summit of a vast rocky promontory, with a good gateway and oriel window

—and then we are enveloped in the murky cloud that hangs over Newcastle. But none should leave the district without visiting Morpeth, a centre of interest from which many charming scenes and interesting ruins may be visited, such as Hartburn, recalling many poetic associations; Brinkburn Priory, in a deep melancholy solitude founded by the Bertrams in the reign of Henry the First; Mitford Castle, connected with the same family; and Cockle Park Tower, a most interesting example of the fortified peel-house, with a grand view, embracing the ruins of eleven castles. Then to Bothall, a beautiful ride by the banks of the Wansbeck, the castle on an eminence in a deep vale, a great gateway, and two towers. But time would fail to tell the simple bead-roll of all the notable places that a diligent traveller may discover in this fine old feudal land of lovely hills, sweet rivers, a grand coast-line, pure and invigorating air—all these will the traveller find, if he make no other discoveries.

MADAME GÉRAND.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

MAISON-RONCHARD was a long, narrow white house, situated on the bank of one of the great rivers of France, and only separated from it by the high levée or causeway, on which a straight line of road bordered by tall poplars extended as far as the eye could reach on either side.

The house was turned endways towards the road. Its double range of windows, and its two doors—one low, mean-looking, and evidently thrust in as an after-thought at the corner of the rez de chaussée; the other rather imposing in appearance, and gained by a flight of stone steps—opened on a court-yard, of which the most noticeable features were a range of poplars; a dilapidated and weather-stained alcove, round which a half-withered clematis made a poor feint of twining; and an old well, protected by a moss-grown parapet, and furnished with a windlass and chain. Only the end windows of the first and second floors looked over the court-yard wall on the white road, the dark poplar trees, and the broad river beyond; and of this view we had the full benefit—the extreme end of the house, with its narrow door opening from the basement storey, having been partitioned off by Madame Gérard for the accommodation and greater seclusion of her lodgers. With

a similar intent, she had erected a steep and ladder-like staircase from the passage called by courtesy a hall, to the topmost storey of the portion thus alienated, so that her tenants enjoyed, as she explained, all the convenience of a private house, together with the privileges and immunities of furnished lodgings.

This it was which determined my choice, and led me—a childless widow, in charge of two little orphan nieces—to establish myself at Maison-Ronchard in preference to engaging a suite of apartments in one of the large hotels of the neighbouring town. It was my first winter abroad, and I had not become reconciled to the idea of parlour, drawing-room, bedrooms, kitchen and scullery, all on one flat.

I had been directed to this out-of-the-way habitation—château, he rather pretentiously styled it—by M. Baston, a notary and house-agent, who informed me, with a profusion of bows and shrugs, that the place would suit me “to a wonder,” adding that the owner, being herself the daughter of an Englishwoman (the late lamented Madame Ronchard), would quite understand what was requisite to make me and my family comfortable. M. Baston evidently considered the use of this word a graceful concession to English prejudice. Notwithstanding his assurance, however, I found the accommodation scanty. The place looked bare and cheerless in comparison with our neat English home; the little salon on the first floor, with the adjoining bedroom, being the only apartments fitted up with any degree of comfort. The upper rooms, although well-sized and airy, were poorly furnished, and the narrow staircase did not boast a shred of carpet; madame shaking her head energetically when asked to provide it. A door on the upper landing communicated with her part of the house; but this, she said, with a touch of sadness in her tone, had not been opened for very many years—not, in fact, since her mother’s death.

These drawbacks were, however, counter-balanced by advantages not to be secured in more convenient and fashionable localities. Besides the benefit of country air for my little charges, one of whom had been somewhat of an invalid from her birth, we had the use of a large well-kept garden opening from the court-yard.

Madame Gérard was a market-gardener on a small scale, and her light cart was sent every Wednesday and Saturday into Hautbourg, where the bush-fruits and

white strawberries planted by her English mother, and, later in the season, her peaches and apricots, choice apples and large pears, found, as she told me, a ready sale in the fruit-market on the Place Saint Louis.

At the end of the court was the wooden gate leading to the vineyard, which covered the whole side of the steep hill rising behind the house, for madame was also an extensive propriétaire, having inherited from her father, with the dwelling-house and garden, a large tract of the vine-land extending along the northern bank of the river.

At the foot of the hill, and close under the shelter of the court-yard wall, stood the cottage of Guilbert, the vigneron, who was also steward, gardener, and general outdoor servant, while his wife seemed to act as a kind of charwoman, doing much of Madame Gérard's household work, her only domestic being a Bretonne named Françoise, of whom I need only say here that she was old and cross, and withal a model of honesty and propriety.

As to Madame Gérard herself, she was a small, thin, sharp-faced woman, wearing her own grey hair braided under a plain cap, and scarcely looking her age, which she said was sixty-one. Unlike most Frenchwomen, she was undemonstrative and reticent on the subject of her family and personal affairs. She spoke English fluently, but used many French idioms. Her voice was thin and high, and her manner ungracious and even repellent, although not absolutely rude. Her dress was that of a widow, black, with the plain net cap and gauze veil worn at that time in France by widows of the bourgeois class.

As I write of a long past time, I may say without indiscretion that the inhabitants of the old town of Hautbourg were, almost without exception, staunch Carlists, rendering allegiance in secret to the exiled representative of the Bourbons, and submitting only under protest to the rule of the Citizen King. The customs of the ancien régime still prevailed there to a great extent, and only a woman of the higher ranks could venture to appear in a bonnet.

Madame used to walk into town on Sundays and market-days attired in her cachemire dress, rockspun shawl, and widow's cap and veil, sheltering herself from sunshine and showers under a huge cotton umbrella. Truth compels me to add that she figured at home on washing-days and other occasions of domestic disorder, in a flaming tartan, which she told me

had belonged to the late Madame Ronchard, and which she, as she signified, was now wearing out through motives of economy.

Indeed, we soon became rather good friends; and although she had at first shown great distrust of the little girls, and had even hesitated to receive them, saying bluntly that it did not suit her to have children about the place, she softened considerably on finding that they did not interfere with her arrangements, and often came herself to our door with a few flowers or a bunch of grapes for little ailing Rose.

I had been visited by most of the English residents. Hautbourg counted at that time some two hundred colonists from the British Isles, who, here as elsewhere, formed a coterie apart, and only mixed on occasions of ceremony and under certain restrictions with the society of the place; and I—sadly against the grain of my insular prejudices—had yielded to the persuasions of my new acquaintances so far as to write my name in the visitors' book at the Prefecture, receiving in return a card for Madame le Préfet's Thursday evening receptions. Of this, however, I had no intention of availing myself—at least, for the present, although an appearance at the Prefecture was, I was assured, considered indispensable as a passport to general society.

Meanwhile, my visitors, one and all, expressed unqualified surprise at my having settled in such a remote place, in preference to engaging a furnished house in the upper or fashionable quarter of the town, near the gardens of the Eveché, open to the public as a promenade. I was half inclined to regret not having been directed, in the first instance, to that locality; but we were tolerably comfortable at Maison-Ronchard, and the place seemed to agree with the children, who, spending their days in the garden, or amongst the vines on the hillside, improved daily in health and strength, in spite of the forebodings of the British matrons, who croaked incessantly about the low situation, and the probable bad effects of the damp air from the river.

The weather, for the first few weeks of our stay, was magnificent. We had arrived late in October; just in time for "St. Martin's summer;" and except for the early closing in of the night, I could have fancied that we were yet in August. But just before Christmas the atmosphere became clouded; the mornings, hitherto so bright, grew dark and chill, and a succession of heavy fogs set in, most unusual, I

was told, in that clear bracing climate. We spent a dull, cheerless Christmas; the children being confined to the house with bad colds; Mitchell, the nurse, who had been discontented from the first, getting up a fit of the vapours, and crying incessantly for three days; and I, as was only natural, feeling lonely and dispirited. The first Christmas in a strange place is generally a dreary one, and in this instance I felt it especially, the year just past having brought many sad vicissitudes to me and mine. But, in the course of the next few days, a hard frost set in, letters arrived from home, colds and vapours vanished simultaneously, and the New Year came in bright and clear, bringing gifts of various sorts to revive the drooping spirits of the little ones.

Even Mitchell's ill-humour disappeared, and her intense disgust at "foreign ways" was somewhat modified by a visit to the gaily-decorated shops, and an invitation for Bertha and Rose to a children's party at the house of Madame Desnonets, the wife of the leading physician, who had made himself so popular with the English residents that he was received in their set as one of themselves, a distinction to which he owed the jealous distrust of his fellow-citizens, and the appellation, despite the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour at his button-hole, of "le docteur Anglais."

Mitchell having been specially invited to spend the evening with Madame Desnonets's English maid, and to assist her in dispensing cakes and lemonade to the little guests, I went at ten o'clock to the children's room to see that the fire was good, and all in readiness for their return. As I reached the top of the stairs I was startled by a low, moaning sigh, which seemed to come from within the door communicating with Madame Gérard's side of the house. I recollected that I was quite alone, for madame, I knew, was spending the evening in town, and I had just left old Françoise at the hall door in noisy conversation with Louison, our servant, and for a moment I felt frightened; but presently, saying to myself that what I had heard was but the cry of a night-bird, I passed into the room.

It was a clear, frosty night, and finding the shutters open, I lingered for a moment to watch the grey mists floating over the river, and the shadows of the tall poplars cast across the levée by the rising moon. Just as I turned from the window, I heard a repetition of the wailing sigh, so

loud and distinct that it seemed to come from the landing. Much alarmed I hastened from the room. There was no one outside; but, touching, in passing, the door in the partition wall, I seemed to disturb some living creature within, for I heard a sound as of something lifting itself heavily from the floor, followed by the dragging of a weight along the adjoining passage, and a slow, halting step, which, so far as I could judge, traversed the entire length of the house, and came to a sudden stop at the extreme end of the landing.

For the moment I was stupefied with terror; but the children's voices on the stairs recalled me to myself, and I hastened down to meet them.

Mitchell, I saw at once, was out of sorts. I said nothing, however, until the little girls had gone to bed, when I told her what had occurred, and learned with some surprise that for the last two or three weeks she had been listening to sounds such as I described.

"You must know, ma'am," she said, "that when Miss Rose was ill, just before Christmas, I was in and out a deal at night between the children's room and my own; for I was afraid of a return of that nasty croup she had so bad last winter; and from the first I noticed the strangest noises next door, and someone moving about, and dragging things up and down the passage in the dead of night. One night little missy was very restless, and she asked me was it old Françoise who was waxing the tiles—a barbarian fashion, I'm sure it is, making the floors so slippery that no Christian can walk on 'em. I didn't like to annoy you, ma'am, and not being able to come to any understanding with the women here, through their quick way of gabbling that I'm not used to, though I've contrived, one way and another, to pick up enough of the language to make my own meaning pretty plain"—on this point I may remark that Mitchell laboured under a delusion—"I said nothing about it. But I asked madame, as if by chance, 'was it she' occupied the upper rooms, and she answered me quite short that they were never used, except as store-rooms for winter fruit and such-like. So it stood to reason that no one didn't ought to be walking about 'em at night—not to say snorting and moaning, as I noticed through the door."

Mitchell went on to say that this very night she had been told by Madame Desnonets's maid that Maison-Ronchard had "a bad name"—was supposed, in fact,

to be haunted—and that no lodgers ever remained in it longer than a few months. No servant belonging to Hautbourg, she said, would live in the place for any consideration. I now recollected that I had had great difficulty in finding a servant, and that Louison was a stranger, who had come from a distant village in search of a situation. I thought, too, of the croaking of my English friends, and began to perceive that there was a special cause, either real or imaginary, for their dislike to the residence I had selected.

"Does Madame Gérard know of this?" I asked.

"She knows it well," rejoined the nurse; "but she'll never seem to mind it—not she! When anyone has the courage to mention it to her she draws herself up quite stiff and says she doesn't believe it, and if she did she wouldn't mind it, and the ghost might walk from this till Doomsday for all she'd care. And 'tis my opinion," concluded Mitchell, "that she must be a very hardened woman to say anything of the sort."

I will admit, at the risk of being scoffed at by strong-minded readers, that I retired to rest that night in no enviable frame of mind. The morning light, however, dispelled my fears, and in my renewed courage I was able to laugh at the story and to resolve to treat it as a mischievous and silly invention. But I soon found that there was sufficient reality in the matter to make us exceedingly uncomfortable.

The noises in Madame Gérard's portion of the house continued at irregular intervals during the next three or four months. All would be quiet, perhaps, for many days, and suddenly the disturbance would set in again, sometimes going on at night, sometimes in the daytime, but seldom, as we remarked, for a day and night together. Besides the moaning sound which I had heard in the first instance, we occasionally distinguished a muttering attempt at speech, like that made by a dumb person when endeavouring to make himself understood. Once, and once only, I mentioned the matter to Madame Gérard; but she answered me so abruptly, saying that the place was supposed to be haunted, but for her part it gave her no concern, that I felt quite abashed, and never after ventured to allude to it. I informed her, however, that I should give up the house at the coming St. Jean.

It happened, towards the end of April,

when the fruit-trees were covered with masses of rich blossom, and the garden and vineyard had put on so much of their summer beauty as tempted me to regret having made arrangements for moving nearer to the town, that, having lingered later than usual in the garden, I returned to the house just as the moon was rising over the vine-covered hill. Meeting the vigneron's wife in the court-yard, I stopped to ask for her baby, which had been ailing all day.

Victoire, or La Guilbert, as she was usually called, was a tall, dark, good-humoured peasant-woman, civil, tolerably respectful, and exceedingly noisy. Her little girls—miniature copies of herself, in their high caps, sabots, and striped petticoats—were generally trotting at her heels or clinging to her skirts, and regaling themselves at intervals with black bread and garlic, of which they seemed to carry a never-failing supply in the capacious pockets of their coarse aprons. The infant Guilbert—a wretched little mummy, swathed in calico, and thrown anywhere while his mother pursued her avocations—was, she assured me, convalescent, and she went on to give me the details of his illness, little Delphine, meanwhile, standing by, shy and silent, with her finger in her mouth. But suddenly the child's sullen expression gave way to a look of intense terror, and pointing upwards, she exclaimed in shrill and piercing tones:

"Mother, mother! See! The ghost!"

"Be quiet, silly child!" cried her mother in great anger, catching her arm and shaking her roughly as she spoke; but I followed the child's glance, and saw, for one short instant, at the second-floor window farthest from our side of the house, a strange figure wrapped in white or light garments. It vanished as I gazed, and in the waning light I could not have said with any certainty that it bore the semblance of a human being; but it left on my mind an undefined impression of horror, and I turned sick with a vague unreasoning fear. Then a hand and arm, which I knew to be Madame Gérard's, by the brown-holland cuff reaching half-way up the sleeve, appeared at the window, and the blind was hastily drawn down.

I turned to speak to Victoire, but she was dragging the weeping Delphine through the gate leading to the vineyard, and I saw her no more that night.

Madame was standing on the steps as I passed towards my own door, and wishing me good-evening in her calm, high tone, remarked that the night was fine, although a touch of cold, she added, still lingered in the air. For my life I could not have asked her a question.

Entering the laundry next day, I found Louison in close conversation with La Guilbert. She looked pale and scared.

"Madame must excuse me," she said, laying down her iron, "but I cannot remain in this house. I would work for madame with all my heart, but not here. No, madame; it is too much for me."

The girl spoke earnestly, and I saw that she was ready to cry.

"I tell her, moi, that it will not hurt her," said Victoire in an encouraging tone. "Look at me, par exemple. Not that I would remain, you see, but for my husband. Guilbert laughs at it all, and he would not give up his good place—no, not for fifty ghosts. His father worked on the land in the time of Père Ronchard, the father of madame; and for years after his death he remained in the employment of the English widow, and there was nothing against the place then."

"But Françoise told me this morning," said the girl, "when I spoke of what the child had seen in the window of the upper corridor, that a negro was buried, hundreds of years ago, in the alcove yonder, because, not being a Christian, Messieurs les Curés would not permit his body to be laid in consecrated ground, and that it is his spirit"—here she crossed herself—"that walks at night from room to room."

"Bah!" rejoined Victoire with a contemptuous toss; "Françoise was only laughing at you. How can a girl of your discretion lend an ear to such fables? Don't I tell you that the disturbance has only gone on of late years—in fact, since madame returned from Brittany, a widow, to her mother's house! There is something, no doubt, but I tell you a thousand times that it does no harm. There are people who say things of madame—but, for my part, I do not believe——"

She stopped, the finger which she had raised to emphasise her words suspended in mid-air, and her gaze fixed on the doorway, where, turning, I perceived Madame Gérard in cap and veil, her umbrella on her arm, apparently on her way to town. I should have said that the laundry, which was common to both houses, stood just within the court-yard gate.

"Ah, ça!" madame exclaimed sharply, addressing Victoire; "is it thus you attend to your work? Good-morning, Mrs. Maxwell. I saw one of your little nieces, as I passed the well, playing with the windlass, and I fear she will be likely to take cold, for her frock is quite damp."

She spoke in her usual measured tone and cold precise manner; and it was impossible to judge if she had heard any part of the conversation; but I felt, nevertheless, that I had received a reproof. She had clearly implied that my time would have been better employed in looking after the children than in listening to the gossip of her servant.

A DASHING DIPLOMATIST.

ONE of the most interesting and striking figures of his time, brilliant, intrepid, with a dash of "bravura," was Hugh Elliot, of Minto, brother of the amiable and popular Sir Gilbert Elliott, afterwards Lord Minto. The story of this Scotch gentleman is truly romantic, and with a little exaggeration might have been transferred to the pages of Dumas. He had much, indeed, of the reckless spirit of D'Artagnan, and his adventures in love and quarrel had a good deal of the flavour of that hero's proceedings. His career supplies this reflection, that the difficulty of communication then was favourable to the development of character, as it obliged persons in a position of responsibility to act for themselves, and with resolution, and to carry out plans whose execution might be spread over a long time. Hence the race of excellent diplomatists who served England so well. They could not be checked or assisted by the telegraph or the railway, but could only rely on a slow-moving courier, who often was many weeks on the road.

When a young fellow, Hugh Elliot, like most young men of condition, was sent to travel, with suitable introductions. Young as he was, he was one who could recommend himself, or would at least do honour to his introducers.

After taking service with one of the German States, and acquitting himself in the field with extraordinary brilliancy, when little more than a youth, he determined to adopt a profession for which he deemed himself more suited, and after receiving almost extravagant compliments from his chiefs, he came home and entered

the diplomatic service. He was sent to Berlin, where his intrepidity, high spirits, and love of adventure gained him friendship and indulgence for his escapades (very necessary) from every remarkable person, including the king. A good specimen of the style in which he could resent an affront is shown in his treatment of a Frenchman who had just heard of the acknowledgment by France of the independence of America, and who, thrusting his face in that of the English minister, said with a sneer: "*Voilà un fameux soufflet que la France a donné à l'Angleterre.*" "*Et voilà le soufflet que l'Angleterre rend à la France par ma main!*" exclaimed the representative of England, accompanying the words with a stinging box on the ear.

But the diplomatists of those days, and, indeed, Englishmen abroad, were ever prompt to vindicate the honour of their country in the fashion then in vogue; and the same high spirit prompted Lord Whitworth, English Ambassador at Paris, on Bonaparte's making, at an audience, some demonstration of menace, to draw back promptly and lay his hand on his sword, which had the instant effect of cowing the consular despot. But a more characteristic instance is recorded of a young scion of the Lothian family, Lord Mark Kerr, who, then a boy, was serving on a campaign under his general. They were feasting with some German officers, when one of the latter, "flipping" water out of a wine-glass, purposely splashed his face, to the amusement of his friends. The young fellow laughed and took no notice, but his old general, at the end of the night, called him aside and said gravely: "I fear, nephew, you must take some notice of what was done to you to-night in public." The young soldier replied: "Uncle, I knew too well what was due to your honour and that of our family. I have already called out the officer. We fought, and I ran him through the body."

In 1777, there were some American agents at Berlin, named Sayre and Lee, clever and even desperate adventurers, who were striving to enlist the sympathies and support of the German Court. Elliot was warned from home to keep watch on the "rebel agents," and though the Prussian Ministers assured him that they would give them no countenance, the adroit Elliot soon found out they were being secretly encouraged. His own account of his proceedings is as follows:

"Offers were made to him to procure

him secretly the papers of the strangers, and to replace them without risk of discovery; which offers were accepted, and promises of reward were given to those who made them. Nevertheless, nothing came of these proposals, the risk attending on their execution being found too great. A German servant of his having been made aware of his master's anxiety to procure the papers, by overhearing him say at his dinner-table that he would gladly give a sum of money to any one who should bring him their papers, waited for no further authorisation, but broke into the apartments occupied by the Americans in their hotel; and entering by the window, forced open the bureau, and carried off, "*à toutes jambes,*" the papers it contained. The master of the house instantly accused Mr. Elliot's servant of the theft, stating that he had been offered a thousand pounds only a few days before to become an accomplice to it; several persons belonging to the hotel were arrested."

The police took up the affair, when Elliot came forward, and took the whole responsibility on himself. The papers were restored, and the envoy submitted himself entirely to the King of Prussia's judgment in the matter. Few envoys could have politically survived such a transaction. He indeed offered his resignation, but he only received a mild rebuke from his chiefs, advising him to "abstain from vivacities of language," and be more cautious in his behaviour.

"We had the best reason to know that they (the court) were by no means quieted to the degree you supposed; when you were told that the outrage was forgiven, we had absolute proof that you were only told so, and that it was likely to be seriously resented. . . . The information itself we had already obtained through another channel. . . . You have now only to appear, and to be very discreet in your attention, and in all other respects to pursue the engaging conduct that your own nature would dictate. Let me, however, give you one official caution — recollect always that your letters are for the Royal eye, which is so constructed as to be shock'd at any coarse expression. You lately said "that a certain prince would do anything to 'get a shilling.'" I altered the three last words to "gain an advantage for his people.""

At Berlin was living a Madame Verelst with her daughter Mdle. Krauth. The latter was one of the belles of the Court, a gay

frivolous creature, possessing a good fortune. The envoy became violently attached to her, and she appeared to be so to him. They were wholly unsuited to each other. Elliot had, moreover, impoverished himself by extravagance. He was a gamester, and played and lost largely at the court routs, where gaming was in high fashion. His violent uncontrolled temper made him unsuited to be a husband, and the business was violently opposed by the lady's mother. In July, 1779, he wrote to Sir James Harris: "I am married in private, without the mother's consent, to the Krauth; after the éclat of my attachment to her, I had the choice between folly and dishonesty—my affections pleaded for the first, my conscience forbade the latter. On my part there is very sincere affection, bad health, poverty, and the other defects of character which nature has bestowed on me, and which art has never tried to conquer; on hers, there is youth, beauty, and strong parts. My project is to keep the matter secret till the king's death. The Prince of Prussia, Prince Henry, etc., are as much my friends as princes can be. I despise the world too much to fear its vicissitudes, and think her worth sacrificing life and fortune to, if necessary."

As was to be expected, this ardour soon cooled. The young bride found herself neglected for parties and gaming. Mr. Elliot had to return to England to arrange his affairs, and did not correspond very regularly with his lady. A separation was even talked of. He presently had to resign his post, but in 1782 he obtained a new one at Copenhagen. His wife pleaded her health as an excuse for not going with him, and remained with her child and mother at Berlin. He agreed, provided she promised to follow him within a certain time. Her crafty mother sent him reports of an odd kind, one of which ran: "My daughter is well, amuses herself with music, and much more with her toilette. I can't say she loves you as much as she did, but I flatter myself she has a kind of friendship for you. For she is sure to feel that a wife is only esteemed in proportion as she is on good terms with her husband." This encouraging view was supported by some strange reports which began to reach him from friends, and by her determined refusal to quit Berlin. The letter in which she announced this resolve was filled with extraordinary reproaches of his behaviour, which led him to believe that it was not

her composition. On its receipt Elliot, without asking leave, quitted his post, and, travelling without stop, made his way to Berlin. The Prussian laws were hostile to foreigners as regards guardianship of children, and he was determined to possess himself of his own child at all risks. Under an assumed name he entered Berlin, hid himself at the house of a friend, obtained possession of an intercepted letter from his wife which convinced him of the truth of his suspicions. The favoured admirer, it seems, was a certain Baron Kniphausen, a cousin of his wife's.

"Having learned from the same source that his wife was engaged to sup at Prince Frederick's in the evening, he ordered six post-horses to be in readiness, and on the return of Mrs. Elliot's empty carriage to her house, the coachman was ordered to drive to the post-house; the horses were harnessed; the child who had been brought there also in a hackney-coach, was, with her servants, placed in the berline; and, in less than twelve hours after Mr. Elliot entered Berlin, his daughter had passed the gates on her way to Copenhagen, without a soul in her mother's house having had a suspicion of the adventure. He accompanied the carriage through the Porte d'Orangebourg, and came back on foot to the residence of the writer of the letter. Together they proceeded to Mr. Elliot's own house, where he possessed himself, without difficulty, of his wife's papers, among which he found the draft of the letter he had so recently received, in the handwriting of her cousin Baron Kniphausen. Assembling the men-servants, he positively forbade any one of them to cross the threshold during twenty-four hours, under penalty of being 'hâché en pièces,' which expression, we are told, he accompanied 'd'un air d'Alexandre,' and with a hand on his sword; he then returned to his friend's, and spent the night with him in examining the correspondence which they had seized."

On this he sent a boastful challenge to the baron, announcing that "all that was put off was not lost," declaring that he would return for "satisfaction." Then entering his carriage, he wrote his real style and title at the gate of Berlin, "Elliot, Minister of the King of England at the Court of Denmark." He embarked on board a vessel which conveyed him to Copenhagen. He then formally applied for leave of absence, and re-

turned to Berlin, when his adventure and its progress really attracted the attention of all Europe. It can be found described by foreigners in many histories and memoirs. The lover behaved with an amusing lack of valour. "Elliot, having written to a friend in Berlin that he proposed shortly to arrive there, 'when his cane would be more eloquent than his pen to answer the impertinent letters he had received from Kniphausen,' the latter, 'fit le glorieux,' practised pistol-shooting daily, and endeavoured to secure the services of a second." The baron was dismissed from the service of Prince Henry, and was also threatened with arrest, to avoid which he passed into Mecklenburg; and there Mr. Elliot, who, in ignorance of all that had been passing at Berlin, had sought his enemy in vain at Rheinsberg, finally came up with him at three in the morning at a small roadside inn, where, stopping for a moment to make enquiries, Mr. Elliot was refused admission, on the plea of the whole house having been retained by a single traveller who had lately arrived there. Kniphausen was at last driven, from mere shame, to meet his adversary, and named a place on the frontier as the scene of action. They met there at last, Mr. O'Connell, an Irish gentleman, acting as Elliot's second, Copick, a retired officer, was the baron's, but the length of his legs, used in measuring the ground, was objected to by Mr. O'Connell. After two shots were fired, the baron wished to retire, and after two hours' discussion, Elliot insisted on going on, when the baron declared that he would sign the conditions demanded by Elliot on either of the parties being wounded. Elliot was slightly grazed at the next shot, when, on the baron declaring that the wound carried out the conditions, Elliot fired in the air. On this a paper was signed acknowledging that he apologised for his behaviour, and that the reports were false that Elliot had ever attacked him with armed men. On this settlement it was proposed that the combatants should embrace and be friends, but Elliot haughtily or insolently declined. He took off his hat, and in a florid style wished him happiness, but as for friendship that could never be. Elliot was overwhelmed with compliments and congratulations from all, from the king downwards. He had "covered himself with glory." The divorce was procured, but the lady married the baron. Elliot lost his wife

and gained a wound. He consoled himself with these lines :

When youthful ardour led me to the field,
My youthful sword a blooming Laurel won,
When sacred friendship glowed with equal warmth,
My hand propitious gave that friend success;
With fiercer flame, when Love had fired my soul,
That flame, soon mutual, lighted Hymen's torch,
The Laurel, Friend, the Wife—these gifts were mine.

Elliot was destined to achieve another daring exploit in diplomacy. During another war between Sweden and Denmark, he was at a place where hostilities were on the point of breaking out afresh. Without instructions from his court he interposed the authority of England, and threatened both with its interference. He actually succeeded in frightening these forces, and they departed without hostilities. He all but declared war against the allied powers of Denmark and Russia. There has seldom been found a more signal instance of the success of prompt though unauthorised action which was heartily approved of by his employers, though failure would have brought him complete disgrace. His subsequent career was less stormy. He married again under more favourable auspices, filled various offices, including the Governorship of Madras, and died in 1830. To the last he was celebrated for his gay and brilliant conversation. The present Dean of Bristol is his son.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II. CHAPTER XII. NEMESIS.

KING FROST had abdicated. His silver chains no longer bound every rill and stream. Like children freed from a stern restraint, brooklets and rivulets leapt and tumbled riotously. Buds were beginning to swell—ever so little, yet enough to make the hearts of the birds rejoice. Was not Valentine's Day past, and pairing-time at hand?

Of the sparrows that roosted in the ivy round the mullioned window of the squire's room, one or two chirped faintly in their sleep, as though their rest was disturbed by dreams of happy domestic joys to come. Hester heard them as she walked slowly and deliberately round the now darkened chamber, lamp in hand, noting all things, overlooking nothing.

She heard, too, a long, low, moaning sigh come shivering from the thick inter-

lacing boughs of the yew-trees, as though the soft dank breath of the thaw-wind played on the strings of a mighty æolian harp.

The last echo of Davey's departing footsteps had died away some while back; a servant had come in, piled up fresh logs on the hearth, asked if Mrs. Devenant required anything, and, being answered in the negative, had noiselessly withdrawn.

From the lower level of the inner room shone the faint glimmer of a shaded light. From distant parts of the house the clink of bolts and bars had come and then died into silence.

Only the moan of the wind, only the rare soft chirp of the sleeping birds, and the scratching of here and there a branch against the glass, broke the stillness of the night.

The situation was a lonely one for Hester Devenant. To a timid woman the position might have been a trying one as well. But Hester's pulses beat fast and full; a rich spot of colour burned on her cheek; a fire—scarcely of heaven, yet bright and beautiful—shone in her eyes.

She had planned and waited, wearied and toiled, all through the long, long years, and now the reaping of her harvest was at hand; the hour that she had yearned for was nigh.

If she had not prayed, "Lord, deliver him into my hand," that had been the thought of her heart, the bent of her will, ever since she met the glassy stare in her dead husband's eyes, and knew that the dearest thing earth held was wrenched from her passionate clasp. So blinding is a mad spirit of vengeance that, in her conviction of Geoffrey Stirling being Gabriel's murderer, Hester forgot her own share in the murder of a man's life—the wreck of his happiness. What of the weary years of jealous dispeace? What of the nagging tongue, stinging to madness with its sharp utterances? Had not these undermined the strength of a naturally weak character in such fashion that beneath the blow of sudden pecuniary loss the enfeebled brain reeled, and death grew, to a vision blurred and dazed, a thing more desirable than life?

All this had Hester long since forgotten. She had so reasoned herself into a belief of her own blamelessness that no soul appeared whiter, no hands cleaner than her own.

She had thirsted for vengeance. She had been tied and fettered by a chain of enforced silence, and under this pressure the spirit of revenge within her had intensified, as any compressed force must.

Now this consuming thirst would be slaked; desire would culminate in fulfilment.

But for the sound of the wind moaning in the cedar-boughs, the night was very still.

Looking curiously at this or that surrounding of the man who was now given over into her hands, Hester was conscious of all the heat and turmoil of a hunter who finds himself at last upon the trail of a prey long stalked.

She stood a moment opposite the dying miser, her excited nerves thrilled to the swift conviction that the dark woman in the background bore a certain resemblance to herself. She shivered with a fierce throe of triumph as she stared at the distorted face of the moribund.

"He is helpless," she muttered, her hand clenching and falling to her side; "helpless as that dying wretch; and—in my power. I have waited, and now my hour has come."

As if the vehemence and bitterness of her thoughts had in some subtle way touched him, and he felt a need for help and comfort, the sick man began to stir uneasily, calling in strange and husky tones for "Davey."

In an instant the listener's passionate mood sank into calm. Once more the vengeful, threatening Nemesis became the admirable nurse—the ministering angel.

Hester passed noiselessly through the doorway, down the three shallow steps, and to the sufferer's side.

The restlessness that had for many years past been one of Geoffrey Stirling's salient characteristics had now intensified to a disease. His brain held one dominant idea, more distinctly than all others. He was pursued, hunted, spied upon. He must be furtive, yet active—wary, yet up and doing. The lifelessness of his limbs, the numbness of all his faculties seemed to his distorted imagination bonds and fetters forged by cruel enemies. At times it had been needful to administer the strongest opiates. Even these occasionally failed, and a ghastly tottering figure with bent back and shaking limbs would wander round the rooms, peer from the windows, cringing at a moving shadow, starting at a sound.

To have restrained the sick man by force at such times would have driven him to frenzy. There was, therefore, nothing for it but to follow him; answer his wild questionings with what tact and invention the watcher might be possessed of; and be thankful at heart when he sank at last into the stupor of exhaustion that passed for sleep.

That a certain person or persons should be carefully foiled in their attempts to gain access to him, together with a piteous pathetic looking forward to the day of Ralph's coming, as to a day of perfect safety from their machinations, were notions that vividly possessed Geoffrey Stirling's mind.

But for the last week or so there had been an improvement. The sick man had, at longer and rarer intervals, insisted upon rising and being dressed to greet his boy's return; or taken to wandering into the library and back again, hunting aimlessly among papers and books, the while he made Davey lower the blinds because there were "eyes" that watched him from the world outside.

Dr. Turtle had plucked up a slight hopefulness about his patient, and taking his pinch of snuff with a more jaunty air than had been his habit since the squire's seizure, told little Jake that things were "mending a bit" up at the Dale. To this that worthy replied, that from all he could hear, "things 'ud need a mort o' fettlin' to be anything loike, and wur summat after the pattern of a boot as must ha' new top-leather, new sole, and new heel, to be fit for owt."

From which it may be gathered that Becklington thought badly of the squire's condition on the whole, and that Dr. Turtle's newly-fledged hopefulness slid from the general mind like water off a duck's back.

As a good physician, Dr. Turtle was delighted in having secured a good nurse for his patient. He and the vicar shook hands cordially over Hester Devenant's introduction to the sick-room.

"Might have been born in an hospital!" said the doctor enthusiastically. "No fuss, no noise, everything like clockwork, and—which is, my very dear sir, a most important adjunct in such a case as that of our friend—a gentle firmness of will that is priceless—absolutely priceless!"

Dr. Turtle would assuredly have continued to rate Mrs. Devenant's tact and firmness in the highest manner had he seen her enter the sleeping-room at Squire Stirling's call, and at once set herself to calm and quiet a fit of restless excitement that had just seized upon him. He heard this noise: he heard that. He was convinced that Ralph was even then arriving. He was sure the window-curtains were not securely closed: he had seen the gleam of an evil eye watching him

as he dozed. Doubtless some enemy lurked in the thick shadow of the yews. Would someone see to it, please? Hester spent neither time nor strength in contradiction. She crossed to the window, disarranged and rearranged the thick curtains of crimson cloth, the while her patient chuckled to himself to think how keensighted he had been.

He sat crouching over the fire in his favourite attitude, rubbing his hands over and over each other, and now and again passing them along his shrunken legs.

He wore his knee-breeches and black waistcoat, and above them a long flowered dressing-gown, which ever and anon he hugged about him as though, even in that heated room, he was conscious of a chill.

"The cold is in my bones," he said—"in my bones."

It was wonderful how his face had dwindled in these few weeks' illness; how sharp were the cheek bones; how sunken the eyes, how defined the hollow lines of the face. On his head was a small black skull-cap, and from beneath it strayed the grey locks that had taken to growing thin and lank.

He peered curiously at Hester as she moved about here and there; several times putting his hand to his brow as if some broken memory that would not be recalled in its entirety tormented him.

"So you are the nurse," he said presently, in that strangely altered voice that few would have recognised for that of the man whose clear mellow tones rang over the heads of the people one sunny morning long ago, when a great and terrible sorrow befell the good town of Becklington.

"Yes, I am the nurse."

"I hope you know your duties?"

"I hope so too."

"That's well. Ha!" he exclaimed as Hester's foot in passing tripped somewhat roughly against the old brass-bound coffer near the bed. "Have a care—have a care! That's my money-box, you know. No fooling with it, if you please."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Hester. "I did not know."

"Of course you didn't know till I told you. How should you—eh?"

The idea of his own sharpness tickled him. He hugged his gown about him, chuckling.

"It is very late, Mr. Stirling; will it not please you to undress and try to sleep?"

"No, it will not please me to undress.

I may have to start at a moment's notice ; or Ralph may come. You would not have me unable to go forth to greet him, and to meet him, would you ? I took you for a sensible woman from the look of you, but, after all, I see you are only a fool—like most of your sex."

Hester was making the fire up. She might have been stone deaf for all the notice she took of this compliment.

"By the way," said Squire Stirling, who had pushed back his chair to make way for her, and was watching steadily the beautiful profile that showed like a cameo in the warm ruddy glow of the blaze, "did I hear Davey's voice just now ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Had he," this with a restless glance round the room, "come from the bank ?"

"No ; he has been a long journey ; he is tired, and I persuaded him to go to bed."

"Good ; but I hope he will tread softly going upstairs. Lucy cannot bear to be disturbed, she says it shatters her nerves ; besides, there is Ralph. Did you ever see the lad asleep ? No ? You cannot think how pretty he looks, with his cheek pillowed on his palm, and his hair tossed and tumbled about the pillow ! I have bent over him many a time, and thought there was no fairer sight to see in all the world. You should have seen him crossing the floor and coming to me, with his white night-dress gathered in his hand, and his little pink toes peeping from beneath it ; his eyes shining like the stars of heaven, and his lips quivering. He held out his hand to me—so——"

"Yes ?"

"And there lay the golden coin. 'It's for them, dad,' " he said.

"For whom ? I do not understand."

"And yet you call yourself a clever woman. Pooh !"

But Hester would not let him drift from those old memories that held him in subtle chains to-night.

"You said I was a fool a while ago," she said, quietly going on arranging various medicine phials on the mantel-shelf.

"Did I ? Well, if I did, I meant it."

"No doubt ; and, therefore, remember, squire, fools need to have things explained to them."

"True, true."

"Tell me—I am a fool and cannot divine for myself—who did little Ralph mean that golden coin of his for ?"

"For the people, to be sure—the people

who were 'sad and sorry'—the people who had lost their money."

"When the bank was robbed ?"

"When else ? Come nearer (there are spies about, set on me by my enemies), and I will tell you what became of that golden coin."

Hester came near ; her heart seemed beating in her ears ; her hands were growing chill.

After all she was not so strong as she had fancied herself. She had nerves like other women, and when played upon they trembled. Yet she must not betray any agitation, or with the quick cunning of insanity Squire Stirling would say no more.

She stood beside the chair in which he lay back, resting one hand upon it to steady herself.

"A coin like it I sent to a poor widow—a woman with three children, whom little Jake, the cobbler, befriended."

"I know," said Hester, for once incautious.

"How the deuce should you, a stranger, know anything about it ?" said Geoffrey Stirling, turning sharply up to her a face full of suspicion and anger.

"I mean that I know what you tell me."

"Ah, just so, just so," he answered, mollified. "Well, I gave a coin like it to her ; but the one that my boy brought me down that awful night is here—here on my heart. I have worn it as a charm all these long and weary years. Ah me ! such a long, long time, and, look you here, if I die while you are near, see that it is buried with me."

"Why should the years have been long and weary to you, Squire Stirling—a man so fortunate, so lucky in every way ?"

"Now, who told you that ? I didn't."

"Other people told me——" she began.

"The gossiping knaves !" he cried, interrupting her promptly ; "the idle good-for-nothing varlets !"

But she showed something, at this juncture, of that calm strength of will which Dr. Turtle had so lauded in her.

"Neither knave nor varlet told it me," she said. "It is but what all the world knows."

"Well, well," he said, speaking like a fretful child, and moving his head uneasily from side to side, "don't scold me, there's a good soul. I'm weak, very weak—a poor broken-down old man, old before my time ; but it will all pass—all pass. I shall be as well as ever ; it

is this coldness in the legs that bothers me; but Turtle says it is a fancy—a mere fancy—it will pass. Who knows but I may be standing on the platform at Beckington to greet my boy when he comes?"

Here a sudden trouble, a sudden agitation, stirred him.

"They said someone was drowned. Did you hear that, too, among your friends? Someone who was coming home, and—never came. A sad story that! I think it was Davey told it me. I am sorry for those who watched in vain—indeed I am. Are not you?"

"Very sorry."

"So the chattering daws told you I was rich, did they?"

"Yes—and happy; therefore I wondered why you should have sorrow and sadness. What could weight the years for you so that they should pass wearily?"

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' The man who wrote that was wiser than you, though you do count yourself so clever. And may I ask if you take me for a fool that you think I should tell you the bitterness of mine? Every life has its troubles. I dare say yours has had its fair share."

"More—more," she said, not without some passion of voice and gesture.

"There," he interrupted impatiently, "don't whine. I never did—never. But I forgot—you're a fool."

For an instant there was a flare in the dark eyes of the woman by his side that might have warned him he was not dealing with such a one. But the gleam of anger died as quickly as it came. Hester knew she must hold herself well in hand, or the game would be lost.

As it was, she did not despair of victory.

"Where has Davey been? You said 'a long journey.' They should not have sent him without telling me. Was it my uncle's doing? Were they following up some clue?"

"They hoped to do so."

"They won't catch him—not they! I tell you he is a wary fellow."

"Who?"

"The man who robbed the bank. Who else should it be?"

"Who else, indeed? And you are right, Squire Stirling. He must have been wary indeed; a clever knave, in very truth."

"You don't say so?"

The sunken eyes were narrowed to mere slits of light, like a cat's in the sun-

light; the thin face projected in a ghastly mocking grin.

"Yes, I do," said Hester, whose lips, in spite of herself, shook ever so little. "Clever as the Father of Lies himself."

Nothing but a low laugh answered her.

The night was wearing on. The birds no longer twittered in their dreams, for the dead of night lay like a pall upon the world, benumbing all Nature to deepest slumber. Even that breath from the south, the soft thaw-wind, seemed to have sunk into silence.

The sick man, whose nerves were like an instrument shattered and strained, yet upon whose flaccid strings a persistent hand ceases not to play, was showing signs of extreme exhaustion. On his temples, where the hair fell back, glistened the sweat of weakness; a purple tinge had gathered about his lips; his eyes were heavy and dull.

Once more Hester importuned him to retire to rest. But he roused to hot anger at her words.

"At all events, lie down, sir, and take your sleeping-draught."

"Yes," he said, "I should like to sleep. I am tired, very, very tired, and my head is heavy. It is like lead. My eyes burn like hot coals. Give me the dose."

"Not unless you lie down."

For once he gave in to her will and laid him down upon his bed, falling back wearily upon the heaped-up pillows.

"Cover my feet," he said, "they are cold. I can see them, but I cannot feel them."

She laid a thick fur rug across his knees, and moved to the array of bottles on the mantel-shelf. She took up a graduated phial, poured out a full dose as indicated by the bars across the glass; then to this added half as much again.

She carried it to the bedside, placing the drinking-cup to his lips.

"See here," he said, pushing it away; "promise to wake me in a moment if Ralph comes. I must be the first to greet him as he crosses the threshold of his home. I am all ready, you see; there need be no delay. Do you promise?"

"I promise—if your son comes—to wake you."

"Here's to my boy!" he said, and tossed off the potion as though it were nectar, and he were giving a toast.

It can be no mere fancy that the wind has sunk to rest, for all is so still that

every breath the sick man draws is heard with strange distinctness.

The curtains of the bed fall from a brazen ring high up against the wall, and cast a shadow on his face, but his hands lie out where the glint of the fire catches them, and they may be seen to grope and stir uneasily at intervals.

Broken mutterings, too, come now and then from the lips which do not lose their firm lines even in sleep.

Hester, motionless as a statue, not unlike one either in her statuesque beauty—sits by the fire. There is a look of waiting, of enforced patience, of restrained passion on her face, and her eyes never leave the figure on the bed.

A desperate, vengeful woman, with all the hoarded venom of years seething in her heart, she awaits the moment when victory or defeat must be hers.

She has cast her all upon one die, she has formed her plot, and now—will success crown her?

She rises, draws aside the curtain, and bends to look at the sick man's face.

The restless hands are still; the strained eyeballs are half covered by the drooped lids.

Now, on both sides, the curtains are drawn fully back, and tucked away behind the framework of the bed.

Hester has stirred the fire into a hotter blaze. As one who lights up a guest-chamber in honour of coming festivity, she sets every waxen taper alight in the brazen sconces on either side the mirror. These, reflected, fill the whole room with a flood of soft radiance. She locks the door between the rooms, listening a moment intently before closing it.

The outer door, leading from the bed-chamber into the corridor, is, she knows, already fastened.

These things accomplished, she stands a moment—not irresolute, but gathering her forces together to meet a supreme need.

She goes up to the motionless figure on the bed, lifts the head and shoulders in her strong arms, and places an extra pillow so as to support the squire in a more upright position.

She removes the velvet skull-cap; wrings out a sponge in cold water, passes it over the face, and then dabs it sharply on the palm of either hand many times. Finally, she calls the stupefied man by his name, putting her mouth close to his ear.

The heavy eyes still remain half-closed, the hands flaccid and limp.

But Hester sees, with a thrill of triumph, that on either hollow cheek a hot fever-spot begins to burn, and the parched lips move, though as yet they utter no sound.

Again she moves the inert frame upon the pillows; again she utters Geoffrey Stirling's name.

She is beginning to feel certain of success, for the strong narcotic is turning into a strong excitant. The man before her is rapidly becoming that most helpless and pitiable of all creatures, one under the influence of opium—not in sleep, but in delirium.

The spirit of eagerness is taking possession of Hester Devenant, hurrying her on whether she will or no.

The squire's eyes are now open wide; they shine, and yet an awful film is between them and the world they gaze on. A heavy sigh heaves the hollow breast—a convulsive shiver shakes the gaunt frame.

There is silence for a while.

A few moments Hester waits to give the tide of exaltation and delirium time to rise to its full height.

As she sees the sick man's eyes wander with a stare of vacant fear round the brilliantly-lighted room, she speaks.

She is kneeling by his side, a little behind him, so that he can hear without seeing her.

Her own heart beats almost to suffocation as she tries to steady the voice that trembles like a flickering light.

"Geoffrey Stirling, who robbed the bank? Who drove Gabriel Devenant to his death?"

For all answer the gaunt arms are raised high in wild appeal to Heaven, and an exceeding bitter cry for mercy breaks upon the night:

"Give me time, oh, give me time! I will confess—I will confess!"

Hester has won.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLVII. FLORENCE BIDS FAREWELL TO HER LOVERS.

"MAMMA, had you not better take me back to Cheltenham at once?"

"Has that unfortunate young man written to you?"

"Yes. The young man whom you call unfortunate has written. Of course I cannot agree to have him so called. And to tell the truth I don't think he is so very unfortunate. He has got a girl who really loves him, and that I think is a step to happiness."

Every word of this was said by Florence as though with the purpose of provoking her mother; and so did Mrs. Mountjoy feel it. But behind this purpose there was that other fixed resolution to get Harry at last accepted as her husband, and perhaps the means taken were the best. Mrs. Mountjoy was already beginning to feel that there would be nothing for her but to give up the battle, and to open her motherly arms to Harry Annealey. Sir Magnus had told her that M. Grascour would probably prevail. M. Grascour was said to be exactly the man likely to be effective with such a girl as Florence. That had been the last opinion expressed by Sir Magnus. But Mrs. Mountjoy had found no comfort in it. Florence was going to have her own way. Her mother knew that it was so, and was very unhappy. But she was still anxious to continue a weak, ineffective battle. "It was very impertinent of him writing," she said.

"When he was going to America for years! Dear mamma, do put yourself in my place. How was it possible that he should not write?"

"A young man has no business to come and insinuate himself into a family in that way. And then, when he knows he is not welcome to open a correspondence."

"But, mamma, he knows that he is welcome. If he had gone to America without writing to me— Oh, it would have been impossible! I should have gone after him!"

"No;—no;—never!"

"I am quite in earnest, mamma. But it is no good talking about what could not have taken place."

"We ought to have prevented you from receiving or sending letters." Here Mrs. Mountjoy touched on a subject on which the practice of the English world has been much altered during the last thirty or forty years,—perhaps we may say fifty or sixty years. Fifty years ago young ladies were certainly not allowed to receive letters as they chose, and to write them, and to demand that this practice should be carried on without any supervision from their elder friends. It is now usually the case that they do so. A young lady before she falls into a correspondence with a young man, is expected to let it be understood that she does so. But she does not expect that his letters, either coming or going, shall be subject to any espial, and she generally feels that the option of obeying or disobeying the instructions given to her rests with herself. Practically the use of the post-office is in her own hands. And, as this spirit of self-conduct has grown up, the morals and habits of our young ladies have certainly not deteriorated. In America they carry latch-keys, and walk about with young gentlemen as young gentlemen walk about with each other. In America the young ladies are as well behaved as with us,—as well behaved as they are in some continental countries.

in which they are still watched close till they are given up as brides to husbands with whom they have had no means of becoming acquainted. Whether the latch-key system, or that of free correspondence, may not rob the flowers of some of that delicate aroma which we used to appreciate, may be a question; but then it is also a question whether there does not come something in place of it which in the long run is found to be more valuable. Florence, when this remark was made as to her own power of sending and receiving letters, remained silent, but looked very firm. She thought that it would have been difficult to silence her after this fashion. "Sir-Magnus could have done it, at any rate, if I had not been able."

"Sir Magnus could have done nothing, I think, which would not have been within your power. But it is useless talking of this. Will you not take me back to England, so as to prevent the necessity of Harry coming here?"

"Why should he come?"

"Because, mamma, I intend to see my future husband before he goes from me for so great a distance, and for so long a time. Don't you feel any pity for me, mamma?"

"Do you feel pity for me?"

"Because one day you wish me to marry my cousin Scarborough, and the next Mr. Anderson, and then the next M. Grascour? How can I pity you for that? It is all done because you have taken it in your head to think ill of one whom I believe to be especially worthy. You began by disliking him; because he interfered with your plans about Mountjoy. I never would have married my cousin Mountjoy. He is not to my taste, and he is a gambler. But you have thought that you could do what you liked with me."

"It has always been for your own happiness."

"But I must be the judge of that. How could I be happy with any of these men seeing that I do not care for them in the least? It would be utterly impossible for me to have myself married to either of them. To Harry Annesley I have given myself altogether; but you, because you are my mother, are able to keep us apart. Do you not pity me for the sorrow and trouble which I must suffer?"

"I suppose a mother always pities the sufferings of a child."

"And removes them when she can do so. But now, mamma, is he to come here or will you take me back to England?"

This was a question which Mrs. Mountjoy found it very difficult to answer. On the spur of the moment she could not answer it, as it would be necessary that she should first consult Sir Magnus. Could Sir Magnus undertake to confine her daughter within the precincts of the embassy, and to exclude the lover during such time as Harry Annesley might remain in Brussels? As she thought of the matter in her own room, she conceived that there would be great difficulty. All the world of Brussels would become aware of what was going on. The young lady would endeavour to get out, and could only be constrained by the co-operation of the servants; and the young gentleman in his endeavours to get in could only be prevented by the assistance of the police. Dim ideas presented themselves to her mind of further travel. But wherever she went there would be a post-office, and she was aware that the young man could pursue her much quicker than she could fly. How good it would be that in such an emergency she might have the privilege of locking her daughter up in some convent! And yet it must be a Protestant convent, as all things savouring of the Roman Catholic religion were abhorrent to her. Altogether, as she thought of her own condition and that of her daughter, she felt that the world was sadly out of joint.

"Coming here, is he?" said Sir Magnus. "Then he will just have to go back again as wise as he came."

"But can you shut your doors against him?"

"Shut my doors! Of course I can. He'll never be able to get his nose in here if once an order has been given for his exclusion. Who's Mr. Annesley? I don't suppose he knows an Englishman in Brussels."

"But she will go out to meet him."

"What! in the streets?" said Sir Magnus in horror.

"I fear she would."

"By George! She must be a stiff-necked one if she'll do that." Then Mrs. Mountjoy with tears in her eyes began to explain with very many epithets that her daughter was the best girl in all the world. She was entirely worthy of confidence. Those who knew her were aware that no better-behaved young woman could exist. She was conscientious, religious, and high-principled. "But she'll go out in the streets and walk with a young man when all her friends tell her not. Is that her

idea of religion?" Then Mrs. Mountjoy with some touch of anger in the tone of her voice said that she would return to England and carry her daughter with her. "What the deuce can I do, Sarah, when the young lady is so unruly? I can give orders to have him shut out, and can take care that they are obeyed. But I cannot give orders to have her shut in. I should be making her a prisoner, and everybody would talk about it. In that matter you must give her the orders;—only you say that she would not comply with them."

On the following day Mrs. Mountjoy informed her daughter that they would go back to Cheltenham. She did not name an immediate day, because it would be well, she thought, to stave off the evil hour. Nor did she name a distant day, because were she to do so the terrible evil of Harry Annesley's arrival in Brussels would not be prevented. At first she wished to name no day; thinking that it would be a good thing to cross Harry on the road. But here Florence was too strong for her, and at last a day was fixed. In a week's time they would take their departure and go home by slow stages. With this arrangement Florence expressed herself well-pleased, and of course made Harry acquainted with the probable time of their arrival.

M. Grascour, when he heard that the day had been suddenly fixed for the departure of Mrs. Mountjoy and her daughter, not unnaturally conceived that he himself was the cause of the ladies' departure. Nor did he on that account resign all hope. The young lady's mother was certainly on his side, and he thought it quite possible that were he to appear in England he might be successful. But when he had heard of her coming departure, of course it was necessary that he should say some special farewell. He dined one evening at the British Embassy, and took an opportunity during the evening of finding himself alone with Florence. "And so, Miss Florence," he said, "you and your estimable mamma are about to return to England?"

"We have been here a very long time, and are going home at last."

"It seems to me but the other day when you came," said M. Grascour with all a lover's eagerness.

"It was in autumn, and the weather was quite mild and soft. Now we are in the middle of January."

"I suppose so. But still the time has gone only too rapidly. The heart

can hardly take account of days and weeks." As this was decidedly lover's talk, and was made in terms which even a young lady cannot pretend to misunderstand, Florence was obliged to answer it in some manner equally direct. And now she was angry with him. She had informed him that she was in love with another man. In doing so she had done much more than the necessity of the case demanded, and had told him, as the best way of silencing him, that which she might have been expected to keep as her own secret. And yet here he was, talking to her about his heart! She made him no immediate answer, but frowned at him and looked stern. It was clear to her intelligence that he had no right to talk to her about his heart after the information she had given him. "I hope, Miss Mountjoy, that I may look forward to the pleasure of seeing you when I go over to England."

"But we don't live in London, or near it. We live down in the country,—at Cheltenham."

"Distance would be nothing."

This was very bad and must be stopped, thought Florence. "I suppose I shall be married by that time. I don't know where we may live, but I shall be very happy to see you if you call."

She had here made a bold assertion, and one which M. Grascour did not at all believe. He was speaking of a visit which he might make perhaps in a month or six weeks, and the young lady told him that he would find her married! And yet, as he knew very well, her mother and her uncle and her aunt were all opposed to this marriage. And she spoke of it without a blush, without any reticence! Young ladies were much emancipated, but he did not think that they generally carried their emancipation so far as this. "I hope not that," he said.

"I don't know why you should be so ill-natured as to hope it. The fact is, M. Grascour, you don't believe what I told you the other day. Perhaps as a young lady I ought not to have alluded to it, but I do so in order to set the matter at rest altogether. Of course I can't tell when you may come. If you come quite at once I shall not be married."

"No;—not married."

"But I shall be as much engaged as is possible for a girl to be. I have given my word, and nothing will make me false to it. I don't suppose you will come on my account."

"Solely on your account."

"Then stay at home. I am quite in earnest;—and now I must say good-bye."

She departed and left him seated alone on the sofa. He at first told himself that she was unfeminine. There was a hard way with her of talking about herself which he almost pronounced to be unlady-like. An unmarried girl should, he thought, under no circumstances speak of the gentleman to whom her affections had been given as Miss Mountjoy spoke of Mr. Annesley. But nevertheless he would sooner possess her as his own wife than any other girl he had ever met. Something of the real passion of unsatisfied love made him feel chill at his heart. Who was this Harry Annesley for whom she professed so warm a feeling? Her mother declared Harry Annesley to be a scape-grace, and something of the story of a discreditable midnight street quarrel between him and the young lady's cousin had reached his ears. He did not suppose it to be possible that the young lady could actually get married without her mother's co-operation, and therefore he thought that he still would go to England. In one respect he was altogether untouched. If he could ultimately succeed in marrying the young lady, she would not be a bit the worse as his wife because she had been attached to Harry Annesley. That was a kind of folly which a girl could very quickly get over when she had not been allowed to have her own way. Therefore upon the whole he thought that he would go to England.

But the parting with Anderson had also to be endured and must necessarily be more difficult. She owed him a debt for having abstained, and she could not go without paying the debt by some expression of gratitude. That she would have done so had he kept aloof was a matter of course; but equally a matter of course was it that he would not keep aloof. "I shall want to see you for just five minutes to-morrow morning before you take your departure," he said in a lugubrious voice during her last evening.

He had kept his promise to the very letter, mooning about in his desolate manner very conspicuously. The desolation had been notorious, and very painful to Florence;—but the promise had been kept and she was grateful. "Oh, certainly; if you wish it," she said.

"I do wish it." Then he made an appointment, and she promised to keep it.

It was in the ball-room, a huge chamber very convenient for its intended purpose, and always handsome at night-time; but looking as desolate in the morning as did poor Anderson himself. He was stalking up and down the long room when she entered it, and being at the further end stalked up to her and addressed her with words which he had chosen for the purpose. "Miss Mountjoy," he said, "you found me here a happy, lighthearted young man."

"I hope I leave you, soon to be the same in spite of this little accident."

He did not say that he was a blighted being, because the word had, he thought, become ridiculous; but he would have used it had he dared, as expressing most accurately his condition.

"A cloud has passed over me and its darkness will never be effaced. It has certainly been your doing."

"Oh, Mr. Anderson, what can I say?"

"I have loved before,—but never like this."

"And so you will again."

"Never! When I declare that, I expect my word to be respected." He paused for an answer, but what could she say? She did not at all respect his word on such a subject, but she did respect his conduct. "Yes; I call upon you to believe me when I say that for me all that is over. But it can be nothing to you."

"It will be very much to me."

"I shall go on in the same disconsolate miserable way. I suppose I shall stay here, because I shall be as well here as anywhere else. I might move to Lisbon;—but what good would that do me? Your image would follow me to whatever capital I might direct my steps. But there is one thing you can do." Here he brightened up, putting on quite an altered face.

"I will do anything, Mr. Anderson,—in my power."

"If,—if,—if you should change."

"I shall never change," she said with an angry look.

"If you should change, I think you should remember the promise you exacted and the fidelity with which it has been kept."

"I do remember it."

"And then I should be allowed to come again and have my chance. Wherever I may be, at the court of the Shah of Persia or at the Chinese capital, I will instantly come. I promised you when you asked me. Will you not now promise me?"

"I cannot promise anything—so impossible."

"It will bind you to nothing but to let me know that Mr. Henry Annesley has gone his way." But she had to explain to him that it was impossible she should make any promise founded on the idea that Mr. Henry Annesley should ever go any way in which she would not accompany him. With that he had to be as well satisfied as the circumstances of the case would admit, and he left her with an assurance not intended to be quite audible that he was and ever should be a blighted individual.

When the carriage was at the door Sir Magnus came down into the hall full of smiles and good-humour, but at that moment Lady Mountjoy was saying a last word of farewell to her relatives in her own chamber. "Good-bye, my dear; I hope you will get well through all your troubles." This was addressed to Mrs. Mountjoy. "And as for you, my dear," she said, turning to Florence, "if you would only contrive to be a little less stiff-necked, I think the world would go easier with you."

"I think my stiff neck, aunt, as you call it, is what I have chiefly to depend upon;—I mean in reference to other advice than mamma's. Good-bye, aunt."

"Good-bye, Florence." And the two parted, hating each other as only female enemies can hate. But Florence, when she was in the carriage, threw herself on to her mother's neck and kissed her.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. IV. THE RECTOR.

THE Rev. Francis Northborough B.D., our rector, had, at one time, held a fellowship at Barabbas College, Cambridge; which fellowship, together with a tutorship, he gave up when the living of Shillingbury became vacant by the death of Dr. Unwin. Shillingbury was the great prize of the college. Its great tithes were a sort of retiring pension after which the fellows especially longed, as the solace of those days of ease and seclusion, which ought to mark the close of a life spent in the wearing course of college routine. Seeing that the duties in question occupied only three hours a day for about six months in the year, it was perhaps a little strange that the fellows should wear out so fast as they did. When any fairly good living belonging to the college became vacant,

there was always some overworked fellow ready to step into it, but there would be half-a-dozen to the fore should the living happen to be Shillingbury. For more than forty years Dr. Unwin had held it, and he had seen more than one generation of expectants pass away before him. At last he followed his predecessors over to the majority, and Mr. Northborough, as senior fellow, succeeded him.

To anyone not in the secret it would have appeared that Mr. Northborough's position as fellow, tutor, and dean of Barabbas was one which might well have satisfied the ambition of a moderate man. He had the prettiest rooms in Barabbas, his friends used to say in all Cambridge. From the lovely oriel window of his room one looked over the velvety lawn, flanked by grey moss-grown balusters of stone, down to the Cam flowing sleepily along under the towering trees of the gardens on either side. In spring the delicate lilac of the wistaria, and in autumn the burning red of the virginia-creeper, lightened up the sombre hue of the crumbling walls. As to furniture and arrangement the rooms were comfort itself. The dinner at the high table was good enough, and the cellar of the combination-room was above criticism.

Francis Northborough had come up as a scholar from a small country school. He came out fourth wrangler in a famous year—Nudgebury's year. The names stood, Nudgebury, Clocker, Dix, Northborough, and the last-named was, in less than six months, elected to a fellowship at Barabbas. He took an active part in college work; and gradually as the old fellows dropped off, the college offices showed a tendency to unite themselves in his person. He became dean and bursar, and as a matter of fact ruled the college as completely, though perhaps not as despotically, as a certain great man ruled a certain great college which lay hard by. His income was ample, though perhaps not so large as that of the rector of Shillingbury. His position, to a man who dearly loved to rule the roast, seemed to give all that could be desired. Still he was not happy, still he listened attentively to every rumour which reached him of Dr. Unwin's failing health; waiting, not very patiently, for that attack of bronchitis which should vacate the living; for Dr. Unwin had had bronchitis every winter as long as the memory of man went back.

Naturally it will be asked where lay the

reason of this discontent with a destiny seemingly so enviable. There was a thorn in Mr. Northborough's cushion, a very sharp one too, and it will be best, I think, to tell the story of its origin before I go on further.

Fifteen years after Northborough's election to his fellowship, the professorship of recurring decimals became vacant. It was well known that Northborough would be a candidate. Every Master of Arts had a vote for the appointment, and before long his address found its way to half the country parsonages of England. For some time it seemed as if he would be returned unopposed; but they who reasoned so, reasoned without complete knowledge of the working of the clerical mind. One of the junior fellows of Barabbas was the Rev. Thompson White, a young man of prominent piety and a mouthpiece of Evangelical Christianity; and he, thinking perhaps that Northborough held offices enough already, announced himself as a candidate also, and set to work to induce the electors to reject his opponent's claims to the professorship in favour of his own. Now to a man who was not very scrupulous this was not a difficult task, seeing that the electors were, nine tenths of them, country parsons; for, in his early days, Northborough had enjoyed the reputation of holding extremely liberal opinions in religious matters. He had been a member of a discussion society which used to meet to hear an essay read, and deliberate thereon afterwards. With some little trouble Mr. White got hold of one of Northborough's papers, and without difficulty managed to extract from it heresy enough to have sent the writer to the stake in the good old days. A circular embodying all these horrors, accompanied by appropriate observations, was sent round to the electors, asking pertinently whether a man who had spoken in such terms of baptismal regeneration was fitted to teach recurring decimals in a Christian university. To the lay mind it did not seem that Northborough's early theological opinions had much to do with his capacity as a teacher of mathematics; but this was not the view the country divines took of the matter, for on the day of the election Northborough was several hundred votes behind his honourable opponent.

During the contest, of course the issue of the fateful circular was much discussed. No one knew who had sent it, and Mr. White said one day in public that such a step, whatever might have been the prompting

motives, was deeply to be regretted; but very shortly a friend of Northborough's brought to him the envelope in which his own particular circular had been enclosed; and if the handwriting upon it was not that of the Rev. Thompson White, it was a very clever forgery indeed.

Though he was not the man to cry out of his wounds, Northborough felt this stab in the back very keenly. To live in the same college, to dine at the same table with the man who had dealt it, would be intolerable.

A month ago he had longed for no better fate than to finish his days within the walls of Barabbas. Now the place was hateful to him, and he only thought how he might get away from it. The rectory of Shillingbury was a very good one, and Dr. Unwin was very old. Up to this time he had never dreamt of Shillingbury or any other country preferment. In fancy he had built for himself a very different Castle of Indolence, but Mr. White's machinations had swept all this into nothingness. After a very short debate he decided to accept the living, which would certainly be offered to him, whenever Dr. Unwin should be taken to a better world.

Dr. Unwin lingered on for four years after the election, and then Francis Northborough turned his back upon Barabbas College for ever, and began, rather late in life perhaps, the career of a parish priest. I cannot say that the first impressions of the parishioners concerning the new rector were favourable. Personally he was a tall, handsome, florid man with an imposing presence, his style of preaching was pleasant, and his voice was loud and resonant. Judged by his look and his voice, the rector might have passed. It was when his parishioners came to meet him face to face that they found there was something about him—no one could exactly define what it was—which they did not like. When you entered a room where he was it was like going into the presence of an iceberg, and if you ventured to make a remark, you would become conscious immediately afterwards that you had just made a fool of yourself. Anything which the rector might say to you would assuredly tend to deepen rather than to dispel this impression. You always felt as if he were treating you as he used to treat undergraduates who had been summoned before him for misdemeanour, and the happiest moment of your interview was the one when the door closed behind you.

If the rector had been ambitious to make

himself a name as an active minister, he could not have set to work in a more favourable field. It is the fashion in these days of ecclesiastical activity to speak of the Church as a Church dormant rather than militant during the period I am writing about. I do not know if this assertion be universally true; but it certainly describes accurately the state of things in Shillingbury during Dr. Unwin's pastorate. Then the slumber of the Church was deep and tranquil. The old rector was withered in person, tottering in gait, and inaudible in voice; and Mr. Wix, the curate, strongly resembled him in all these. When the two old men used to creep about the sunny paths of the rectory garden on warm afternoons, they reminded one of two ancient rooks, now grown too decrepit for nest building in the swinging branches of the lofty elms, and doomed to consume the weary days of their decline hopping about at the foot of the trees, high up in which their noisy descendants built and bred.

Mr. Northborough was an active man in the prime of life, and everybody looked for some change on his coming into residence; but the change in matters spiritual was not very great. The taste for Gothic architecture and the earnestness of these latter days slept along with the rest of the Church. The restorer was not sent for in hot haste to lay hands upon our parish church. The high pews, comfortably cushioned and curtained, remained intact. The organ gallery, a huge structure blocking up the lovely tower arch, where Jonas Harper used to preside on Sundays over a choir of very old men and very young boys; the Lion and the Unicorn on one side of the chancel, the Lord's Prayer, the Belief, and the Ten Commandments, executed in yellow letters on a chocolate ground, on the other, were left to adorn the sacred edifice. I think the only change worth notice was the substitution of evening service for afternoon during the summer months, and the performance of morning prayer on Ascension Day, a festival hitherto unnoticed in our parish. It was when we came to meet our new rector in his temporal capacity of chairman of the vestry, charity trustee, and in various other ex-officio positions that we began to see how widely he differed from the old one. Dr. Unwin used to let us go on in our own way, and I dare say he sometimes suffered his own rights to be invaded rather than set up a shadow of opposition; but we soon discovered that our new minister

was one who knew how to take care of himself.

I once heard a good parson declare with tears of emotion in his eyes that the Church of England must be the true Church, otherwise she would surely have perished from the lukewarmness and corruption of her ministry during the century now happily passed away. I did not quite see the force of the parson's logic, but I forebore to gainsay his dictum, for I could see that this belief was a source of real happiness to him. I thought much about his words; and I came to the conclusion that, let the Church of England be the true Church or not, she must at any rate be endowed with strong powers of vitality, otherwise she would never have prospered as she has under a system of preferment like that which sent the Rev. Francis Northborough to be rector of Shillingbury.

In making this statement I do not wish to say a word against the rector as a man. It was not his fault that the Church was ready to employ in directing a parish of three thousand souls, half of them Dissenters, a man who had passed his best years in teaching and examining Cambridge undergraduates, a man whose orthodoxy was so imperfect that he could not be trusted to lecture on recurring decimals. He was probably quite as good as the average college fellow who takes a living after a spell of tutorial work. They are all infected with donnishness, whether they come from Unity or from St. Kittywakes. Of course there must be donnishness in a university; a seat of learning without it is "unthinkable," and loses its *raison d'être*; but as a rule donnishness does not help the parson of a country parish to get on with his people.

As a matter of fact a college fellow who goes to take charge of a parish is as much a stranger to the ways and thoughts, the wants and troubles of the poor, as if he were a stray denizen of another planet. He will manage to lay "our dear brother" in his last resting-place as effectively as any other duly ordained minister, but he will find himself hopelessly at sea if he be called upon to give to "our dear brother" spiritual consolation in sickness, or temporal counsel in any worldly trouble. The Rev. Francis Northborough was as little fitted to talk to the poor of Gander's End, the St. Giles's of our parish, as the Rev. Jabez Roker, the Wesleyan minister, would have been to rule St. Barabbas

College, Cambridge. He was cold, methodical, and unsympathetic. His friends used to say he was a kind-hearted man, and certainly he would give his bounty when he was convinced that the case he was called upon to aid was a deserving one. Apropos of this his enemies were wont to declare that this convincing process took so long that, as often as not, the applicant would solve the question by going off to another world before the rector could be persuaded to loosen his purse-strings. He was a strictly upright and honourable man, though the hostile persons above-mentioned used to affirm that he had a way of demanding his rights very much like that practised by a gentleman one sometimes sees on the stage, dressed in a yellow gaberdine, and carrying in his hand a pair of scales and a large carving-knife. The rector demanded his full rights, and I suppose people who do this always are unpopular.

It was not long before he let those about him see that the slipshod and happy-go-lucky way of doing things would no more be tolerated; and that he had not been studying exact science all his life, and been placed fourth wrangler of his year, for nothing. Indeed, before he came into residence he found scope for the exercise of his corrective faculty, and this proved to be in the thorny field of clerical dilapidations. Dr. Unwin's executors, as soon as the old man was dead, sent at once to the rectory a bricklayer and a carpenter, who made fast a few bricks and tiles and put up some palings here and a gate-post there, and then the executors, good easy men, fancied that their duty was done, and that no farther claim for dilapidations could be made; but this was not Mr. Northborough's way of doing business. An ecclesiastical surveyor was sent in, and his report, when it reached the late rector's representatives, made them open their eyes very wide indeed. There was a tottering buttress on the north side of the chancel; many of the window-frames in the rectory were worm-eaten. There was a settlement in the north-west gable, and the roof of the tithe-barn was in a ruinous condition. The estimates for these repairs came to many more pounds than the executors had spent shillings. They made many protests and remonstrances; but the new rector had the law on his side, and he soon gave his opponents to understand that he meant to have the work done in a proper manner and without delay.

In Dr. Unwin's time we managed to get through our parish business without much trouble, because he left everything to Anthony Tuck, one of Lawyer Merridew's clerks. He did all the churchwardens' and overseers' accounts, and acted also as Dr. Unwin's steward for the tithe payments and the glebe rents; but at the first vestry meeting he attended, our new rector objected to the irregularity we had hitherto committed in paying Anthony's salary of twenty pounds a year out of the highway rate. The rector had parish law at his fingers' ends, and when some of the rate-payers, aghast at the idea of having to put such unwonted strain on their calculating powers, asked how the parish work was to be done, he blandly replied that the rate-payers, who were liable to be called upon to fill parish offices, must do the work, or pay for the doing of it themselves. The payment must certainly not come out of the rates.

Poor Anthony lost his other employment too, for Mr. Northborough acted as his own man of business. Dr. Unwin had always let his glebe on very easy terms on condition that his tenants should not bother him about repairs, and this form of tenure may have had something to do with the deplorable state of the tithe-barn when the new rector came into possession. The latter had already gained some experience of land management as bursar of Barabbas, and when he walked over his glebe and compared the acreage with the figures of the rents, he said it was very much underlet. The condition of the premises too told him that Dr. Unwin's plan of letting the tenants do the repairs, meant that repairs would not be done at all. So he relieved his tenants of this duty, taking it into his own hands, and raised his rents twenty per cent. He carried out his part of the contract to the letter. He drained pastures, built cattle-yards, and did all that any tenant in reason could ask for. His tenants prospered in spite of the addition to their rents, but after all he was not popular amongst them, and you could not talk ten minutes with any one of them without hearing something about how times were changed for the worse since the poor old doctor's time.

The co-operative bogey had not then arisen to vex the souls of the retail tradesmen, but in this matter the rector was in advance of his age. Before he had been with us a month he discovered that groceries and other articles of common consumption were very dear in Shillingbury; or at least that

the rector was expected to pay very high prices for them. Mr. Figgins, our leading purveyor, received one evening a polite invitation to wait upon the rector, and when he was ushered into the library, Mr. Northborough blandly laid before him a price list he had just received from London, together with a statement showing that he would effect a saving of twenty-five pounds a year by going there for his goods.

Good Mr. Figgins stammered out some excuses about small returns, the same prices as Dr. Unwin had always paid, and so forth, but it is needless to say these arguments had not much weight with a man of exact mind. The rector informed Mr. Figgins that he did not feel himself in the least degree bound to employ Dr. Unwin's tradesmen, simply because he had succeeded to Dr. Unwin's benefice; and as to small returns, if small returns meant dear goods, then he must transfer his custom to some tradesman whose returns were large. If Mr. Figgins had been a wise man he would have put the price list in his pocket, and said he would look through it and see what he could do; but he was not a wise man. He had been educated in the belief that the rector's tithes, being paid by the parish, ought to be spent in the parish. As long as he had been in business he had enjoyed the whole of the rectory custom, and, when he heard from the lips of the rector himself the unheard-of doctrine that the receiver of the tithes meant to spend them how and where he liked, he lost his temper, and, making some rude and unreasonable remarks, he shuffled out of the room.

That evening, at The Black Bull, he had his reward, such as it was. He was the chief talker of the evening, for he had a tale of thrilling interest to tell to the club; how he had had it out with the new parson, and had given him a bit of his mind, how he had told him not to send to his shop for pounds of sugar or ounces of tea. If he did he would not get them, for he had better send his small orders where he sent his large ones. "And if there is any sperrit in the town," said Mr. Figgins with a defiant look at the company assembled, "all the other tradesmen will tell him the same as I have told him." Mr. Wisk, the iron-monger, remarked that it was certainly a queer sort of a thing if there was no law to stop a man from taking all that money out of the parish; and that if there was not, the sooner we had a revolution the better—a

strange sentiment to come from the mouth of Mr. Wisk, seeing that he was one of the staunchest Tories in the town. After this utterance it seemed to be the turn of our butcher, Mr. Ribston, to speak. Mr. Ribston stood rather in awe of Mr. Figgins, who was guardian of the poor, and supposed to have considerable influence in placing the Union contracts for meat. His opinion on this matter differed from that of Mr. Figgins, so he judiciously said nothing, but sat with his lips glued tightly round his pipe as if he were engaged in some peculiar smoking process which prevented him from speaking a word. Mr. Ribston had a large family, and he did not well see how he could echo the haughty defiance of Mr. Figgins. He only committed himself to speech when the very general proposition that things were going from bad to worse in the town was advanced by poor Walter Tafnell, who had just rung for his third glass of gin-and-water.

When he first came amongst us Mr. Northborough was sore in spirit from disappointed ambition, and generally out of humour with his kind. He thought nothing of the duties of his new position, only of its emoluments. He cared not whether people went to church or chapel, or nowhere at all, and he trusted no man, whether Churchman or Dissenter, after his experience of the Rev. Thompson White.

And it is certain that the rector did make himself very unpopular indeed; for he would leave nothing alone. He did himself the most harm in his interference with minor things. Now it was the ringers, now the widows' gift, and now the church bread. I dare say he found something lax in the management of all these, but he certainly found very little injustice, and I never heard that a soul was any the better after he had reformed them.

In matters of more importance I am bound to say he was often right and did much good. It was the rector who moved the Charity Commissioners to grant a fresh scheme for our Free School. His treatment of poor old Dr. Addlestrop, the head master, was a little harsh, no doubt. It was hard for the latter that he, a gentleman of culture and a scholar, should be forced to arouse himself from the dignified leisure of the last twenty years, and teach to tradesmen's, or even labourers' sons, geography, mensuration, and the elements of arithmetic. But Mr. Northborough had been all his life in the habit of dealing with figures, and spaces, and powers,

and dimensions, and none of these had either feeling or consciousness. He dealt with Dr. Addlestrop on the same severe lines of mathematical exactness. When certain hints were dropped in his presence that the poor old man's feelings were deeply wounded by the new state of things, the rector pursed out his lips, shrugged his shoulders, and wrinkled up his forehead. The question as he had understood it was one of public duty, and as such there was no place in it for what people were pleased to call "finer feelings." Indeed he refused to recognise feelings at all as factors in the problem he had to work out. He did not thrust his own feelings out into the public gaze on every occasion. If people liked to indulge in such weaknesses they must abide the consequences. It was hard on Dr. Addlestrop, perhaps, but it was still harder, the rector declared, and with reason too, that the people of Shillingbury should have been deprived for years of all the benefits which Christopher Sendall, the founder of our Free School, had desired them to enjoy from his bequest.

The people most concerned in the matter, the tradesmen and better sort of mechanics, did not give the rector many thanks for the trouble he took, though it gave them a school where their children could obtain, for a nominal cost, the education most fitted for them. The general remark was that the rector had made all the stir for the sake of upsetting something, and of vexing Dr. Addlestrop, who had been the old rector's bosom friend, and not from any wish to benefit the town folks; but this did him injustice. He did good service, too, in the matter of the charity land. There were half-a-dozen enclosures of rich pasture belonging to the poor lying within a quarter of a mile of the town. These had been let for more years than any one could remember to Mr. Docking, of Wood End, whose farms lay adjacent to them. Mr. Docking was a very good farmer and a very well-to-do man; he was also a good customer to more than one of the trustees who had the letting of the land, and this may have been the reason why the rent of the poor's land remained stationary, while rents around went up ten or fifteen shillings per acre. But the very first time the rector attended a trustees' meeting he astonished his colleagues by putting before them a statement, drawn up in faultless form, and painfully exact, which showed them that in the past ten years they had let three hundred pounds, which ought to have

gone to the poor, slip into a rich farmer's pockets. He did not say they had been dishonest stewards; but his words and figures, taken together, certainly did leave an uncomfortable impression behind them. As soon as he had finished his speech there was silence for a minute or two. There was no escape for the peccant trustees. In the parish itself there was land of an inferior quality rented at a pound an acre more. Mr. Figgins, whose wife was a distant relation of Mr. Docking, raised a public plea for letting well alone seeing that they had such an excellent tenant; but the rector threw out dark hints as to what might happen if an appeal were made to the Charity Commissioners, and carried his proposal. The year following the land was let by auction, a sporting publican hired it at nearly double the former rent, and Mr. Docking fetched his cushions from the church and took seats for himself and his family in the Wesleyan chapel.

We were not a very learned set of people in Shillingbury in those days. Our mental atmosphere was altogether different to that in which our rector had been living before he came amongst us. We did not realise this at first, and we were puzzled to find out how it was that he would always disagree with us whenever there was a possibility of disagreement. He had not been six weeks in the parish before he had demonstrated to us that for the last quarter of a century, whenever we had acted in any matter where there had been an alternative, we had invariably gone wrong, and even in carrying out our wrong resolutions we had used wrong methods. He always had his proofs all ready arranged in perfect order, and I must say our commonplace and unvarying excuse—that things had always been so as long as any one in the parish could remember—did sound rather weak. But though in most cases we stuck obstinately to our old ways, we got on fairly well and were no worse off in Shillingbury than our neighbours were. The fact was that the rector's fine cut-and-dried plans and projections, his rigid reasoning on abstract principles, would have carried all before them in a world constructed and peopled by senior wranglers. They were faultless, like those delicately made watches which go all wrong when the weather becomes too hot or too cold; but, luckily for us, they were wound up and set going in a faulty world. They were exact, like every other product of the rector's brain, but there were disturbing currents in the atmosphere of

Shillingbury quite strong enough to relax their fine hair-springs and throw all their delicate movements out of gear.

Our rector was, to use a vulgar expression, a square man in a round hole. When he first came he was as antagonistic to his new surroundings as acid is to alkali, and as he began so he went on. The parish was in a state of perpetual effervescence, and one of the elements of disturbance would surely be found at the rectory. He came to Shillingbury in search of quiet, but his was one of those natures which can only rest when they have things entirely their own way. He might have found quiet, if he could have ruled us as he did the undergraduates at St. Barabbas. Then again, it must have been a cruel disappointment to him to find that, in parochial mathematics, three and two sometimes make six, and that, now and then, two straight lines did enclose a space. The one thing he sought at Shillingbury evaded him. He would have done better to stay on at St. Barabbas and make the Rev. Thompson White's life a misery to him.

A WINTER PICTURE.

LINKED hands of woman and of man,
Eyes waking, watching eyes that sleep;
Close-curtained windows, pictured walls,
Whereon the ruddy fireshine falls
With cheerful, tender glow;
A brodered wrap, a jewelled fan,
And by the couch a fragrant heap
Of waxen blossoms, white as snow.

A weary brow where tresses cling
Uncurled, as if with heavy dew,
White flower-like lids, that soft and meek
Shade the sharp outline of the cheek,
Like ivory pure and pale;
A hand whereon the wedding-ring
Hangs like a fetter growing loose,
All sadly, truly, tell their tale.

So very fair! A year ago
She wore her bridal coronet.
So very young! It almost seems
The shadow of her childish dreams
Is wrapped about her now.
No touch of human want or woe
Hath troubled her young spirit, yet
She fades like blossom on the bough.

She fades. Ah! watcher heavy-eyed,
Cast down thy gold with reckless hand,
Spread lavishly beneath her feet
All goodly things and fair and sweet,
To snare her weary eyes;
She is thine own, thy childish bride,
Thy blossom from love's fairy-land,
Rise up, do battle for thy prize!

Clasp, clasp her close in Love's strong arms,
Kiss, kiss her close with Love's warm lips,
Give all thou hast, and all thou art,
The very life-blood of thine heart,
To save her from her fate.
Let Love stand forth and work his charms
Triumphant over death's eclipse.
Love's very self replies, "Too late!"

There was no lack of corn and wine,
No lack of hope's delightful flowers,
No lack of gay and glittering toys,
Of simple pleasures, childish joys,
To please her guileless heart;
But One hath made a silent sign,
And through the sunshine of the hours
His shadow creeps with scythe and dart.

There was no lack of fondest love
To fence her from life's outer air,
No lack of passion deep and strong
To clasp her close and hold her long
In surest, safe embrace.
The nest is worthy of the dove,
Soft-lined and warm, and very fair.
But One prepares another place.

She is thine own, world-weary man,
Thy very own, a little while,
The tender simple child whom thou
Hast guarded with a solemn vow,
Yet day by day she slips
A little farther from the span
Of earthly life—no earthly smile
Will linger long upon her lips.

Thy wealth, new-showered upon her life,
Was powerless to corrupt her soul,
But ah! that gold, that useless hoard
So widely spent, so freely poured,
Is powerless to save!
Fling down thy weapons in the strife,
Nor love, nor wealth can make her whole.
Go to, thou canst but deck a grave.

But when the green grass laps her in,
Thy tender one, thy little wife;
When all that love must bear and do,
When forced to taste the bitter rue,
Is borne and done and past;
Steal sometimes from the city's din,
From all the hum and stir of life,
To where she slumbers long and fast.

And doubt thou not that there will be
Great cause for praise as well as prayer;
For praise because that cherished child
Was taken hence all undefiled
By worldly stain or spot;
That while the long years weary thee
With touch of age, and fret of care,
Eternal childhood is her lot.

Eternal childhood! Heaven's sweet gift
Unto the blessed pure in heart.
Look up, pale watcher, all is well,
The soul, before it reads, must spell,
Lo! there thy lesson waits:
God takes thy flower from earth's cold drift,
To bloom in Paradise apart,
Till thou, too, pass within its gates.

MADAME GÉRAND

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

ROSE did take cold; and that night, lying awake on a pallet in her room, I listened to the sound of a halting step on the other side of the locked door—a heavy step that came and went incessantly, and seemed to drag a weight through the entire length of the adjoining house.

On the Saturday evening, the child became so much worse that I called in M. Desnonets, who, perceiving symptoms of erysipelas, ordered leeches—the specific, at that time, with French physicians for nearly every known disease. By the time

they had been brought from Hautbourg, and applied, it was nearly midnight; and desiring Mitchell to lie down and get some sleep, I wrapped myself in a shawl, and prepared to watch until morning by the bedside of the little invalid.

I had sat there for more than an hour, and had begun to feel sleepy, when something—I knew not what—roused me suddenly, and I found myself in an instant wide awake and fully conscious. I looked at the sick child—she was sleeping heavily, her face flushed with fever, and her little hands tossed outside the bed-clothes. The bed of the elder child stood at the end of the room, and near the door.

Presently, I heard the door on the landing softly pushed open. I held my breath to listen; and there—oh, horror!—was the familiar halting step actually outside. Then, the bedroom door, already open to admit fresh air, slightly moved, and I saw a ghastly figure enter the room, and pause within the threshold, as if to look around. Had our lives depended on it I could not have moved or cried out. I was struck dumb and motionless with terror.

The figure, which was wrapped in some white or light-coloured loose garment, soon began to move, in a strange distorted way, about the room, halting at every step, and dragging one leg and foot along, as if they were a heavy helpless weight. It passed on with a slow uneven movement, supporting itself by the wall, and stopping at the foot of Bertha's bed, peered through the half-closed curtains. My terror lest the child should wake up and find herself face to face with that spectre, nearly deprived me of consciousness. Reaching the toilet-table it paused; and by the dim light of the night-lamp burning near, I saw reflected in the glass a hideous distorted face, livid as that of a corpse, with hanging jaw, and——but I cannot find words to describe it. Even now I shudder at the recollection. The image of that fearful mask, as I saw it looking out at me from the polished surface of the mirror, will haunt me to my dying day.

Soon, with a terrible wailing sigh, like the moan sometimes heard from a dumb creature in torture, it turned slowly, and dragging the helpless foot along the floor, and supporting itself as far as possible by the wall, it quitted the room. Then I heard a rustling outside, and the fall of a heavy body, and I knew that the fearful thing had stretched itself on the landing.

Summoning all my resolution with a

mighty effort, I darted across the room, noiselessly closed the door, and turned the key in the lock. I listened for a while with beating heart, and ears strained to catch the slightest sound, but soon my head reeled, a noise of rushing waters seemed to fill the room, and I must have sunk fainting on the floor, where, on recovering consciousness, I found myself numbed by the chill morning air, and so thoroughly overcome by terror and fatigue that, finding Rose still asleep, I was glad to creep to Bertha's bed, and lie down by her side. Here, strange to say, I fell into a heavy sleep, from which I was awakened by the sound of the Angelus bell, wafted down the river from the old tower of St. Nicholas' Church.

Presently Mitchell knocked at the door, and on opening it, I found to my relief that the landing was clear, and the door of communication fast shut. No trace remained of the terrible visitor. So great was my dread of the story reaching the children's ears, that I refrained from mentioning it to the nurse; but I sought an early interview with Madame Gérard, and related the night's adventure, making no secret of my indignation at having been subjected to such an ordeal, and representing that whoever or whatever her mysterious inmate might be, she had no right to expose me and my family, without previous warning, to contact with anything so alarming. She did not manifest the least surprise. It was evident that she or her servant had found the door of communication open that morning, and suspected what had actually occurred. In reply to my remonstrance she said that whatever inmates it might suit her to harbour in her house were no concern of mine so long as they did not interfere with me—that, until last night, when, through some accident, or possibly in consequence of the decay of the surrounding wood-work, the door in the partition had given way, I had had no reason to complain of intrusion—that she regretted deeply the annoyance to which I had been subjected, and in order to guard against its recurrence, she had already had the door fastened on the inside with a strong iron bar. To-morrow—this being Sunday—she would have it made yet more secure. She had no wish, she said, to detain me in her house a moment longer than suited my pleasure or convenience, or to bind me to any formal notice or forfeiture of rent, but, whether I stayed or went, she would appeal to my honour as a lady, and my

charity as a Christian, to keep secret what I had seen and heard.

This demand, arbitrary and unjustifiable as I felt it to be, took me completely by surprise, and the annoyance I felt probably manifested itself in my countenance; for madame, who had hitherto spoken in the set phrases and high monotonous tone of one who recites a prepared and well-considered speech, seeing me now, as I suppose, inclined to resent her attempt to impose silence on me, lost in some degree her self-control, and went on to say in a voice quivering with emotion, which she strove in vain to suppress, that the aim of her life had been to avoid publicity, and that it would be more than cruel now to bring notice on her, and perhaps, she added, the interference of the authorities in her concerns.

It must be evident from the preceding part of my story that I am somewhat of a coward, and this fact will perhaps account for my having been quite subdued by her words and manner. In short, she succeeded in extracting a promise from me—a promise of which I repented before I reached my own door.

Yet more did I regret it on the arrival of the physician, who finding the little patient very ill, although free as yet from dangerous symptoms, declared that she could not with safety leave her bed for several days. Erysipelas, he said as I accompanied him downstairs, was a serious thing; and he need scarcely remind a lady of my experience—this was meant as a compliment—that if driven to the head by imprudent treatment, the consequences might prove fatal. And, with many farewell bows and flourishes, the little doctor and his red ribbon got into the carriage and drove away.

What could I do? In any case I should only have moved to the Hôtel de l'Europe, as no lodgings could be provided on Sunday; and even this the doctor's fiat had put out of the question. On the other hand, the promise so cleverly wrung from me forbade me to seek advice or protection from my English friends. I had nothing for it but to remain where I was, and guard by locks and bolts against the return of the nocturnal visitor, who, I now felt certain, must be an idiot or lunatic—probably a relative of Madame Gérard, though what the necessity for secrecy could be was more than I could conjecture.

The doctor repeated his visit in the evening, and found the little invalid much

improved. The worst of the attack was over; and we might hope, he said, to see her quite restored in a few days, but he still enjoined the necessity of care and perfect quiet. It was quite late—nearly dusk—when he left the house, and I accompanied him to the outer gate, while receiving his instructions for the night. As he took leave, a clergyman, whom I recognised as the curé of the neighbouring church of St. Nicholas, entered the courtyard, and, saluting me as he passed, went on towards Madame Gérard's door. She met him on the steps, and conducted him into the house. His visit surprised me, as I had never yet seen a clergyman of any denomination at Maison-Ronchard; and I had been tempted to believe that madame did not herself bow to any religious teaching. Yet more was I astonished, when sitting half an hour later with little Rose, to hear from Louison that Monsieur le Curé waited in the salon, and desired the honour of a few moments' conversation with me.

A tall, middle-aged man rose to salute me as I entered the room, which was dimly lighted by a single shaded lamp. His appearance was prepossessing, and the tonsure, from which his dark hair hung down in waving masses—together with the looped-up cassock, and the three-cornered hat, resting with a breviary on the table by his side—showed him to be a Catholic priest. His manner was simple, straightforward, and gentlemanlike. He came, he said, at Madame Gérard's request, to express her regret for having spoken somewhat abruptly to me that morning—I would, he felt sure, excuse her if I but knew the heavy anxiety on her mind—and to inform me that I need be under no apprehension of future disturbance, as the unfortunate invalid who had intruded on me the previous night was now, through the mercy of God—and the priest reverently bowed his head—happily at rest. He had always been perfectly harmless, otherwise Madame Gérard would not have run the risk of keeping him in such close proximity to her lodgers; and the increased restlessness which he had manifested during the last few weeks had been but the precursor of death.

I wished much to ask more particulars; but something in the curé's manner forbade discussion. He paused at the door to say that the funeral arrangements would be no annoyance to me, as all should be done with the utmost privacy; and then

took leave, giving his blessing to Louison, as she saluted him at the foot of the stairs.

I was inclined to reproach myself for not having asked if I could be of service to the poor lonely woman, but it was now too late. Louison and Mitchell were chattering downstairs—the latter evidently at cross-purposes with Louison's French. They were probably discussing the curé's visit, and speculating on its purpose; but they knew nothing, apparently, of the death which had just taken place so near. I walked into the court-yard, and looked up at Madame Gérard's windows. There was no appearance of anything unusual. All was dark and still, save in one room—that to which little Delphine had pointed in her terror—where a single light was faintly burning.

I do not know when the funeral took place—probably on the Monday night, for we saw or heard nothing of it, and on the second day after the curé's visit, madame was about as usual; but there was a sadness in her countenance which I had not before observed, and an additional shade of stern precision in her voice and manner.

I met her in the evening as she passed from the garden to her own door.

"I hope," she said in her high measured tone, as she coldly shook hands with me, "that you have experienced no bad effects from your alarm of Saturday night; I feel that some apology is due to you."

With nervous haste I assured her that none was needed.

"Will you come in?" she said, signing to me as she spoke to precede her up the steps. "I have more leisure now than before," she continued, with a faint attempt at a smile; "and you will not be afraid to venture into the haunted house. Pray sit down," for we had now reached the sitting-room; and, pointing to a fauteuil covered with faded Utrecht velvet, she seated herself on the sofa.

It was a small poorly-furnished chamber, hung round with hideous daubs representing fruits and flowers of no recognisable species, in the style known at that period as poonah-painting; while a framed print of the young Duc de Bordeaux hanging over the mantelpiece sufficiently attested the political principles of its inmate.

"Monsieur le Curé must have told you," she resumed, "that it has pleased Heaven to remove my late afflicted charge into safer keeping than mine."

I murmured an assent; adding some-

thing—no doubt awkward and ill-timed—of such a death being a release.

"You would say so," madame rejoined, "if you knew all.

"You see me now," she continued in her precise, studied English and slightly foreign accent, "old and grey-haired, and you, who scarcely number half my years, cannot probably figure to yourself a time when I was young, pretty, and beloved—a happy wife, and a proud mother. Nevertheless, that time seems to me but as yesterday.

"My husband was a propriétaire, living on his own land in the vicinity of Quimper. His mother and a younger brother shared our home. Like all Vendéans they were pious Catholics, and devoted to the royal cause.

"One winter night, a non-juring priest arrived at our door, cold, hungry, and worn-out with fatigue. He was an old man, and he had been curé of a neighbouring parish before the troubles began. My mother-in-law knew him well; and she and my husband welcomed him warmly, and entreated him to remain, and recruit his failing strength under our roof. He had come from Paris; and by the fireside that night he told us of the horrors he had witnessed there. I need not repeat them. Every child is familiar now with the fearful tale of the first Revolution.

"The early dawn found us all assembled in a barn at a short distance from the house, where—the door having been barricaded with carts set on end—the old priest celebrated the rites of our Church, and administered holy baptism to our infant child. The rite concluded, the little congregation dispersed as cautiously as possible—the priest, disguised in a peasant's blouse, retiring to the wood-house, where he lay concealed behind the great heap of logs during the daylight hours. But Françoise, who was the faithful Bretonne nurse of my little one, and who had been one of the first to leave the barn, whispered to me, as we entered the house, that she had seen two figures lurking within the copse, opposite the door, and that she felt certain we were watched.

"A plan was arranged for getting the priest away that night to a place of safety; but, before the time arrived, a band of the Blues, or Republican soldiers, surrounded the house, demanding, with frantic cries, that the old man should be given up to them, and calling on my husband to surrender himself a prisoner on the charge of having harboured a suspect.

"He, with his dependants, offered a determined resistance; and the assailants, enraged, set fire to the out-offices, whence the flames quickly spread to the dwelling-house. Françoise, bent on saving me and my child, managed, with the assistance of her brother, to let us down from a back window while the soldiers were engaged in dragging logs from the wood-house to heap around the burning building; but, as soon as I had seen the little one in safe keeping at the cottage of the nurse's father, about half a league off, I returned with her to what had so lately been my home.

"We found the fire raging fiercely, while our savage enemies surrounded the house, and watched to prevent the escape of their victims. Two of these were, however, reserved for a different fate.

"Through a refinement of cruelty, my husband and his brother had been rescued from the flames; and they now stood, bound, amidst their captors, watching the destruction of all that they held dear, and listening to the death-shrieks of their aged mother and her household, as, with the priest, they perished in the flames.

"Françoise and I, afraid to come forward, concealed ourselves at first behind a low wall; but when the flames had begun to die out, and the first faint streak of grey appeared in the eastern sky, I saw the demons in whose power they were, preparing to fix ropes round the necks of the two captives. Then I threw myself before them, and entreated for mercy in the name of everything sacred; but I might as well have remained silent. They but laughed at my despair, and thrust me roughly away.

"During the scene that followed, I lay insensible on the ground, and only recovered consciousness to find Françoise bending over me in tears; our house a blackened pile of ruins, showing dark and ghastly against the red dawn; and two bodies hanging from the leafless branches of a great chestnut-tree, and swaying helplessly with every gust of the chill north wind.

"I did not know at the time—I have never since learned—how it happened that our lives were spared. It may be that the fury of our enemies had exhausted itself before they found leisure to decide as to our fate. I cannot tell now how, with Françoise's help, I contrived to reach the cottage where we had left my child; nor can I recollect how soon after it was that old Mathurin, her father, set off with his

sons to obtain possession of the poor remains, for the purpose of interring them secretly in consecrated ground. I only know that, late that night, as I lay in the heavy stupor of despair, with the infant on my arm, Françoise knelt beside me, and begging that I would prepare myself for a startling disclosure, told me that my husband still lived. Perceiving some faint signs of vitality in the discoloured and disfigured body, they had summoned the wise man, or village doctor, who had with exceeding difficulty succeeded in restoring suspended animation. We may not seek to penetrate the designs of Providence, but in our poor human judgment, the existence thus prolonged could scarcely have been deemed a blessing. An illness of many weeks, during which he lay concealed in a loft over Mathurin's stable, and seemed to vibrate constantly between life and death, left him what you saw—a hopeless idiot, paralysed, and nearly speechless, recognising me only as a dog might recognise its owner; but perfectly harmless, patient, and easily managed.

"We brought him hither—Françoise and I—in my mother's lifetime. My poor infant was by this time dead—it had never recovered the exposure on that bitter January night. We contrived to keep his existence a secret, for we dreaded the interference of the authorities, as he had been taken when resisting the soldiers of the Republic; and, later, when such fears were at an end, the habit of secrecy had grown on us, and we could not parade our great grief before the eyes of the world.

"For more than forty years I have watched over and tended him, praying night and day that, through Heaven's mercy, he might not be permitted to survive me. My prayer has been heard, and I am thankful that he is at rest.

"Allow me once more to apologise for the annoyance I have unintentionally caused you; and to beg that the explanation I have considered justly due to you may rest a secret between you and me."

The subject of that evening's conversation was never again alluded to, either by me or Madame Gérard.

I left her house on the following St. Jean, and removed to a more convenient habitation near the town; but she and I were better friends from that time, and I was indebted to her later for many acts of neighbourly kindness.

Her house, however, retained its bad

name. I considered myself bound, while she lived, to keep her secret, and during my stay in Hautbourg I was looked on, in some measure, as a heroine, in consequence of having spent a winter at Maison-Ronchard.

AN ESCAPE FROM PRISON.

A FRUITFUL source of romance is to be found in the stories of the English cruelly detained in France during the Revolution, and later on by Napoleon, and who were called *détenus*. Strange to say, the number of our countrymen who were residing abroad a hundred years ago, appears to have been far greater than at present, though the difficulties and expenses of travel were of course far greater. A good deal of this was owing to fashion, which deemed travel and visits to foreign courts to be an essential in any genteel family's education; it was also owing to quite an opposite cause, viz., the cheapness of living abroad, and the happy security from arrest for debt which a visit even to Calais could secure.

The adventures of the English abroad during the Revolution would make an entertaining volume. The story of Grace Elliot has been told by herself, and forms a very exciting piece of adventure. But that of one of the Lords Massareene during the same period forms an episode that is no less interesting.

This nobleman appears to have been one of the gay "rollicking" lords who were in fashion at that period. When the Revolution broke out he found himself in Paris, and on some suspicion, or for some escapade, he was arrested and thrown into prison. There the daughter of the governor of the Châtelet, Marie Borcier, took an interest in his sorrows, and by her sympathy won his heart, and they were married in 1789. No chance of release however offered, the weary imprisonment went on, and then the intrepid wife conceived a plan for carrying out his escape. This she related some two years later, viz., on September 13th, 1791, when safe on English ground, to a member of his family, who instantly wrote it down. From this interesting little record the following is taken:

"The many efforts made by Lady M—— to deliver her husband from an imprisonment of many years were in themselves so very extraordinary, and occasioned events

so almost unparalleled, that they are worthy of being recorded, and 'tis from a conversation, had with herself not half an hour ago, that I now put down the heads of some of the principal events.

"The first attempt that she made for his delivery was by two ladders, one of ropes, and the other made of wood and iron; upon which ladder, which required to be fifty French feet long, he was to descend into the yard, from thence cross into the garden, and scale that wall by means of the rope-ladder. Lady M—— herself at different times conveyed all the materials necessary for this work into the prison. The boards she brought openly, having had them cut in pieces the size of pictures, and having herself painted them to represent such; the iron and ropes she conveyed at different times concealed in her clothes; and a ladder the length proposed was at last finally finished. The next thing necessary was to get a key, that at night would open the different doors that it was requisite to pass through in order to get at the window out of which they only could pass. She got the impression taken, and as it was impossible to get a key made at Paris from an impression without raising suspicion, she got the necessary tools and made herself a key that opened every door that was requisite, except my Lord M——'s door, and that, notwithstanding every effort, could not be got to open. However, this difficulty she also contrived to overcome, for as she had been obliged to put nine prisoners in her confidence, who were all to escape with my lord, she concealed an iron bar in her clothes, and with this had a hole made under the head of Lord M——'s bed by which he could cross out into the next room, the door of which was easily opened by her key. This being a noisy business, was obliged to be done during the day, while my lord and she made as much noise as possible, he playing on the fiddle and she singing—the ladder had been entirely made at night.

"Everything was now prepared and ready, and nothing wanting to make the retreat secure but the death of two dogs, which were the faithful guardians of the yard through which the prisoners must pass—to this care also she attended, and mixed so strong a poison with some food for them, that she was sure they were entirely incapacitated from doing them any injury in their design. Satisfied that everything

would succeed to their wishes, and having completed everything within the prison, she, with her brother, awaited their arrival on the outside of the garden wall, where, at a little distance, a carriage was ready to convey them instantly from Paris; but unfortunately not having thrown all the dose prepared for the dogs, one only died, and after all the prisoners had descended into the yard, the second expiring animal revived sufficiently to alarm the turnkeys with his barking, who immediately arriving, found the nine prisoners upon the brink of escape; but instantly calling the guard, they were all brought back, and, horrid to think of, thrown into the most wretched of dungeons, where, miserably stretched upon straw, without light, air, or one comfort human nature is capable of tasting, they were left in bitter anguish of soul to lament their unsuccessful attempt, and to mourn their bitter punishment.

"Lady M——'s activity never ceased one moment, exerting itself until by her importunity the judges after nine dreadful days and nights consented to Lord M——'s enlargement from his den of horrors to his former apartments in the prison. His figure when he came out was hardly human; his flesh and clothes were alive with vermin; and with the damp and chill of the place he had taken such a severe cold that he spit blood for months after.

"This unsuccessful attempt did not in the least damp the spirits of Lady M——. She resolved to deliver her husband (though from what he had suffered in the dungeon, he now dreaded any effort being attempted to be made, lest fresh misery should again attend him). She was therefore unwilling to tell him all she was attempting for his deliverance. But three or four days before the memorable one that laid in ashes that abhorred Bastille in 1789, and at the commencement of the great French Revolution, she spoke to some friends of his who were of the National Assembly, to entreat they would, if possible, speak in favour of the destruction of the Hotel de la Force, and they came and told her that if she could engage her brother to join the prisoners within in breaking the inside doors, while she would excite the populace on the outside to force the outside gate, they were sure it might be done, particularly as they were going to get an order for removing the outside guard.

"She undertook to do this, but in order

to be fully apprised of the business, she herself attended the National Assembly, where she had everything favourable to her wishes, and having settled with her brother how he was to manage everything within, she assembled the populace about her in the Rue St. Antoine, and asked them, if the prisoners belonging to the Hotel de la Force should break their inward doors, whether they would go with her and throw down the outward gate. She represented that they relieved people that had been imprisoned from having been imposed upon, not shut up for lawful debts, and therefore in moving their generosity and their worth, she depended upon their following her thither. This harangue, attended with an ample distribution of money, had the desired effect, and they all marched with her to the outside gate, at which the prisoners soon after arrived by means also of a woman, a wife to one of the men who was there confined, who, as soon as they had possessed themselves of the bars of the windows, walked before them and knocked at the door as if she wanted to pass out, which being opened as usual by the guard, they all rushed forward and prevented its being again shut by placing their bars against it. They then addressed the guard, who, for what reason it is impossible to tell, their officer being absent, permitted them to proceed to the next door, which they broke, and so on, six in number, until they came to the great gate, which could not be forced without the utmost difficulty, on the outside. Then they knocked, but knocked in vain, for though the populace had at first willingly followed Lady M—— to that place, yet there they stopped, and all her promises, all her entreaties, all her threats, proved vain to make them attempt to throw it down. Distracted at length with the fear that all that was done already was done in vain, Thomas, her brother, leapt up to the top, where a grated iron filled up the top of the gate, and there with his hands all covered with blood, he was endeavouring to drag the bars from their sockets.

"The populace saw this, and appearing affected, Lady M—— once more implored their pity, told them it was now or never that they could deliver persons that had suffered so long and so cruelly.

"The instant decided their fate, the next saw the gate fall down before them; the prisoners once more saw themselves free, once more could breathe the open air

and mix with their fellow-creatures. But not one would pass the gate until Lord M—— went first, who having been abed when this scene began, appeared without either hat, coat, or waistcoat, and only a stick in his hand, which being seen by one of the populace, he ran up to him with an old sword, saying :

“ ‘ My lord, this weapon is a poor one of the sort, but it becomes your hand better than that you have.’ ”

“ Lady M—— immediately gave him two guineas.

“ The prisoners were immediately conveyed to the Duke of Dorset's, and from thence to a dinner that Lady M—— had ordered for them at the Temple. But being apprehensive that if Lord M—— did not leave Paris that night, he would again be taken, she, while they were regaling themselves at this entertainment, gave orders for her own equipage to be got ready to set out about twelve o'clock from Paris by the 'Bourg St. Denis. In the meantime engaging publicly a lodging for my lord for some time at the Temple, and placing a servant there with orders that anybody that came to enquire for him, they should say he was asleep. Accordingly, about the hour appointed, my lord and three other gentlemen got into the carriage, but were stopped at the gate by the populace, who absolutely refused to let them pass. Lady M—— again harangued the people. She stepped forward and told them that she would confide in them and honestly tell who it was and where the person was going who was in the coach. She did so, and though they for a time continued to oppose it, yet they were at length overcome by her arguments and let him pass. She returned home to her own house, and followed him to England in about ten days.

“ Nothing appears so wonderful as Lady M——'s amazing strength of mind in having been able to take so active a part in such a dreadful affair as the above, considering the miseries she had endured from having been imagined to have been concerned in a former attempt for an escape made about seven years before.

“ Three gentlemen who were confined in the prison with Lord M—— at that time, came to him and told him that they had a scheme to make their escape, and if he would join them he would most certainly, as well as they, succeed. This they said without at that time informing by what means they intended to accomplish

this end. Lord M—— informed Lady M—— of this conversation, and one day another person in confinement came into his room, and mentioning the names of the above-mentioned gentlemen, said that he was sure they proposed escaping, for they had pistols in their rooms. This appeared odd both to Lord and Lady M——, as they could not imagine what use those could be. However, they made a dreadful one of them, for they shot at the guard and really killed one man.

“ Lady M—— had no idea of this affecting either her or my lord, and therefore was most dreadfully shocked when, upon coming as usual to see my lord in the morning, she was stopped and told she was a prisoner, and summoned to meet these three men before the judge, who, it was said, had accused her of having conveyed to them these arms. Two of these exculpated her, but the third neither by entreaties or threats could be got to utter one word, and the judge for this most unjustly threw her into a dungeon for twenty days. Description can never come up to what she suffered in this place. She was without cap or handkerchief. She had a muslin gown on, and they took the strings off her petticoats, her garters, etc., from her, in order, as they said, to prevent her destroying herself. The dungeon was so low, she could not stand up, nor had she anything to sit on but wet straw all alive, no light, no fire, no comfort. Her pain of body from the dreadful damp, the vermin that covered her, the want of every absolute necessary, in short, no torment but hell torments almost could exceed it. At length they sent for her out to stand her first trial, and the cruelty of the judges was such that they would not tell her what her sentence was finally to be ; but for the present ordered her back to her den of horrors, which order in general implies that the criminal is to be executed. She endured it with patience until the turnkey was just going to shut the dreadful grate, then in an agony she entreated him, as he had seen all the patience with which she had endured her deep suffering, to reward that patience now by telling her whether she was condemned to suffer. He told her not, upon which she entered once more the dungeon, where she was kept some days longer and then sent to the Conciergerie, where her prison was made most comfortable to her by the tenderness of the woman that took care of her (the Châtelet was the place where she was con-

fined in the dungeon). Four months she was still to remain before her second and final trial, and at the end of that time she stood it, and was finally and most honourably acquitted. She then entreated leave to go and see Lord M——, who had been entirely distracted during the time of her imprisonment. He knew that her trial was to come on, but did not know of her having been acquitted, and at the time that she entered the room he was employed writing a letter to a lawyer about the cause with his back to the door. Her brother was sitting on the other side of the table, and seeing her appear at the door could only say, 'There she is,' and fainted away. Lord M——'s joy could only equal his former misery during her confinement. He had never even shaved himself, and his hair, from being quite brown, was become entirely grey. The consequences though of her prison she will probably never survive, for her constitution got a shock it can never recover. Soon after her enlargement she had so violent a fever that she was left for dead, which fever was succeeded by an eruption and so dreadful a swelling in her breast that it was obliged to be laid open, and her whole frame, though of the strongest natural make, has been so shook that she will probably never again know what health is, though good spirits and good humour seem in her greatly to supply the want of it."

This foreboding was to come true, for the faithful lady—worthy successor to Lady Nithsdale—survived only two years after her exploit, and died in 1791.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIII. THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

AFTER that one passionate utterance of despair and penitence had passed his white and quivering lips, Hester left her victim quiet for a while; not prompted thereto by any impulse of pity, but because she was absorbed in struggling with her own emotions—those wild steeds over which she had imagined herself possessed of the fullest control, but which showed signs of being stronger than herself.

It is one thing to suspect a thing, or even to be morally convinced of it; it is another thing to hear it put in words; to see, not "in a glass, darkly," but to stand face

to face with a fact that has taken actual form and shape.

All through the long years Hester had identified Geoffrey Stirling with the man who robbed the bank, and built up his own fortune on the ruin of others; she had not only suspected—she had known.

And yet the sound of the sinner's confession had torn her heart as a knife might rip up an old wound, and set it bleeding afresh.

Hester was kneeling by the bed, where the curtain was strained tightly back. Geoffrey Stirling could not see her; but he heard the sound of her deep, long-drawn breathing, and moaned uneasily in his drugged lethargy.

Her head was bowed upon the bed; her hands clasped above it.

It has been said that, by long-nursed resentment, her mental vision had become distorted, and her own share in her husband's misery obliterated. Now the scene of his death came before her in vivid and bitter reality: the white face rising through the dark water, the veil of ripples parting to let it pass—to let the sightless eyes stare mutely up to heaven, as though imploring pity and vengeance; the drip, drip of the water trickling from the long hair, as the sodden head lay against her breast; the deadly chill of the dead hand huddled into the warmth of her own bosom.

All these things came back to her, hounding her on to keener thoughts of retribution.

Was not Gabriel dead? Was not his murderer living, successful, honoured?

Yes; and he should live too—live to suffer, to meet disgrace and shame; to pay the cost of his black and hellish crime.

The squire was not so ill as people thought. Dr. Turtle was a fool. Other people were fools. It could not be that, after all, this man should escape through the gate of death from the consequences of his sin and treachery—it could not be!

So highly wrought were Hester Devenant's nerves that she seemed to herself but as the instrument of a higher retribution, but as the mouthpiece of many sufferers from a great wrong.

Round about the gaunt, sinewy wrists that showed white and wasted above the fur coverlet, she saw, in her fevered imagination, the shimmer of handcuffs; the skull-like attenuated head of the sick man presented itself to her mind's eye still more skull-like, still more attenuated, because shorn of its grey shadowy tresses.

A felon, in a felon's prison-garb—thus might her eyes gloat over Geoffrey Stirling one day.

This vision was, however, one for the future. The present claimed her energies now. The bitter chalice that her hand holds to the lips of her enemy must be drained to the dregs, not merely sipped.

She peers at the face lying back upon the pillows.

The fever-spots still burn beneath each glazed and blood-shot eye; the parched lips move, though giving forth no audible sound.

The brain is still working—still half-excited, half-numbed by the narcotic.

Hester slips her arm beneath the pillows, raising them gently, until the squire is raised with them almost into an upright posture.

Then she gently moves and even shakes the helpless hands, first one and then its fellow.

Again the eyes open and stare round the lightsome room.

"What," moans the sufferer fretfully, "no rest, no rest?"

"What rest should there be for such as you?" says the accusing voice at his side—the voice that he takes for that of his own accusing conscience.

"True, true," he mutters, in a patient acquiescence that is not without pathos; "but I have gone over the ground so often; must I traverse all the weary way again?"

"Every step."

He turns his head wearily from side to side, as one may see a dumb animal under terrible torture.

Hester waits a while until this piteous movement and protest ceases.

Then, crouching far back against the wall that is bared by the uplifting of the braced-back curtain, she puts an initial question:

"Was the crime—the robbery planned and carried out by you alone?"

"By me alone." Then, with a characteristic touch of irritability he adds: "Who the devil do you suppose I should ask to help me?"

"And you did it—that night?"

"No, no—I began it by little and little. He was going blind, you know; he was easily hoodwinked—I cooked the ledgers. I was most afraid of poor old Anthony; but if he was puzzled at any time, he only thought his own old brain was failing him. I tell you he came to me trembling, shaking from head to foot;

begged me to dismiss him, and to get a younger man in his place. Poor old Anthony! But I have made it up to him—I have made it up to him."

Like clockwork wound up to go only for a certain time, the squire's energy and consciousness were apt to sink suddenly into lethargy until freshly roused.

The next question Hester put to him had to be repeated twice over, spoken close to his ear before it pierced into the confused and tortured brain.

"You used the money—other people's money—for your own purposes?"

"Yes; I took a little—a very little at first. I speculated with it—it doubled itself—trebled itself in my hands. I found myself with quite a hoard, and it was all for Ralph."

"Of course—all for Ralph."

"Who else should it be for? I had no ambitions for myself, they were all for him—all for him."

Then broken images from a terrible past came up before the troubled mind, and, for a time, Hester could not catch any clue to the mutterings of the restless lips.

"You have a pretty skill, boy. 'Tis marvellous well done. Now, Ralph, say a bonnie 'thank you.' 'Tis neatly carved, in truth—and good of you to spend so much time on my dear boy's amusement. He is not ungrateful—are you, sweetheart? I am sorry to see you suffer—try a remedy I know of."

In a flash Hester remembered Davey's evidence at the time of the robbery. She held the clue now; close and fast too.

"You drugged the boy Davey?"

"Ay, he slept soundly, that night. I turned my lantern on his face as he lay—he never stirred an eyelash."

"You were in the bank, then?"

"Yes; in the bank. As for Gaylad—down, Gaylad, down! See how quiet he lies. His eyes, fond and faithful, looking up to mine. He follows me with them as I move noiselessly about. Tut! how the door of that safe creaks. This key, too, it turns uneasily. Anthony should have seen to this better; it should have been oiled; but he grows old—he grows old. I must not be hard on his shortcomings."

"But the outer doors—how have you opened the outer doors of the bank?" says Hester, straining her hair off her brow with her hands, white even to the lips with eagerness; drawing her breath hard in the effort to keep herself in hand.

"How does anybody open doors in the

dead of night, when they don't want to wake a sleeping world? With keys, to be sure—duplicate keys, made in Paris months before—made cunningly, mind you, from casts that I had taken. Someone said that he who robbed the bank was clever as the Father of Lies himself. They said true—true—true."

His whole attenuated frame shook with a low chuckle that was enough to curdle the blood to hear. But Hester was conscious of no fear. She was madly impatient—nothing more.

She wanted to hear the rest of the story. Each moment she feared that the narcotic might begin to daze and numb in spite of all her efforts, and so the tale be left unfinished.

"Why did you pitch upon that night of all others?"

"I dared not wait any longer; the dividends were becoming due—the whole thing would out then. The money was gone, I tell you; good solid gold drained away little by little, like wine, rich and yellow, from a leaking cask."

"But if you had not seen Davey that night, if you had had no chance to drug him (the keys of the safe were in the desk in his room), if he had awakened, what would you have done?"

"Killed him."

The long sinewy hands link and intertwine themselves together in a grisly tension, strangling an imaginary spy.

Then comes a sudden change. The mouth works and trembles, a heavy sob heaves and rends the hollow breast.

"Poor boy—poor faithful Davey! he would not have known me for his master, though; he would not have known whose hand was crushing out his life—thank Heaven for that!"

"He would not have known you for Geoffrey Stirling—you were too well disguised for that." Hester hisses the words through her teeth; she clenches her hand as she utters them, for her they bear a terrible significance.

"I should think you must be the devil, since you know so much about it!" says Geoffrey Stirling, for the first time straining round towards where the voice comes from, and clutching at the coverlet to help himself. But the effort exhausted him. He fell back heavily upon his pillow, and lay staring blankly at the shimmering candles reflected in the mirror that faced the foot of his bed. "Are they stars?" he said, pointing to them; "God's eyes watching—watching all night long?"

"Did the stars seem like the eyes of God to you that night, Geoffrey Stirling?"

"Yes, yes," he muttered, putting his hand to his brow as if to clear away the tangle of shifting thoughts and memories that held him in its horrible meshes. "Yes, and every leaf a listening ear."

"Still, the waggoner's frock, the red beard and heavy false locks were a safe-enough blind—eh?"

"True; but the eyes up above could see through that; they pierced to my heart—to my heart, I tell you."

"You burnt the ledgers?"

"Yes; leaf by leaf. It would not have done to make a great blaze, you know—too much smoke, too much smoke. Even as it was, some fool saw it. When all honest men ought to have been in their beds, he chose to be wandering about spying out what he could see."

"He saw you returning home, did he not?"

"Yes, but that didn't matter; how should it? He wasn't like the eyes that watched from above. He was a fool, as I said before. I stood aside to let him pass. I was always an advocate for the working-classes showing proper respect to their betters—always, anyone will tell you that——"

"Had you burnt the notes as well as the ledgers?"

"Why not? What good were they—eh? So much worthless paper. Phew! how they curled up and crackled as they burnt! They stuck to my fingers like living things."

"Some one else saw you that night, besides the fool who ought to have been in his bed, and wasn't?"

"Another fool—eh?"

"No; one whom men called a madman—Gabriel Devenant."

"He is dead, I tell you. I saw her sewing his shroud."

A restless fear came into Geoffrey Stirling's face as he spoke; the sweat beaded on his hollow temples.

"No," he said with feverish eagerness, putting out his hand as though to push away some unwelcome suggestion; "no, I will not see him. I have been ill. Let me go."

"Gabriel was fond of wandering about in the night-time," went on Hester's voice with pitiless distinctness; "he saw you that night, he followed you home. He suspected you to be the sinner you are."

"I don't believe it," said Geoffrey

sharply, with all his old abruptness of speech; "he was a vague dreamer. He hadn't it in him to divine a thing like that. Anyhow, what does it matter? he's dead—dead and gone to dust long enough ago; who cares what he fancied in that mad brain of his? I dream of him sometimes. His eyes follow me—they are mad, they glare. I see them now. Come here, whoever you are; stand between them and me! You need not be afraid. I tell you the man is dead—dead—dead!"

He cowered down, covering his own eyes with a shaking hand to hide them from the glare of those others.

"He died by your hand, Geoffrey Stirling—he died by your hand as truly as though you had plunged a knife into his heart. By you his wife was made a widow, and his child fatherless."

Hester's words now came pantingly, nor was the fevered flush on the sick man's cheek deeper than that which stained her own.

"You think so, do you?" said the squire, with one of his quick transitions of mood casting aside fear, and speaking mockingly; "well, well, anyway, since he took to harbouring foolish fancies, he's better out of the way. A madman's fancies, I tell you, nothing more. Phew! the people would have been ready to tear him in pieces, they would have jeered at him, hustled him away—God knows what they wouldn't have done to him if he had breathed a word against Geoffrey Stirling!"

He had forgotten his confession, his remorse, his penitence.

The drug he had swallowed was beginning to assert its specific powers, only the more powerfully for enforced delay.

In a little while he would drift away into a land of slumber, where Hester's will could no longer touch or stir him.

She recognised this in the altered tone of his voice, and the dull glare of his eyes. She saw the beaded sweat stand on his hollow temples. She saw the fevered flush beginning to fade from his cheek, as the roseate tints fade from the evening sky when the sun has gone down.

The night, the quiet night of sleep, was at hand—the night in which none could work.

At once Hester dropped the part of the accuser, and slipped into that of the skilled nurse.

She placed the sick man more easily upon his pillows, seized the chance of the consciousness that yet remained to him to

induce him—not without much display of tact and gentle persuasion—to take a cup of strong soup and brandy, and then she sat herself down by the fire to cast up her gains.

He must not slip through her fingers by passing under the dread, dark portal of Death. She had played for high stakes to-night, and she had won. The story of the bank robbery was hers. Here and there blanks in the tale could be filled in with knowledge gained during the patient waiting and watching of the long years that were past, items that fitted into the narrative as told by the chief actor in it as perfectly as the bits into a child's puzzle-map.

Truly the "mission" undertaken while she left little Hilda to the care of old M. Lemaire, had not been undertaken in vain. The flash of intuition that came to her as she read the three words written in tremulous and hasty characters on a slip of paper clenched in her dead husband's hand, had not been a will-o'-the-wisp leading on to bogs and morasses of folly and confusion. It had been rather a light from heaven; a ray to guide her to the haven (of revenge) where she would be.

These were the thoughts that crowded through her mind as she sat by the fire in the stillest hour of that still night, whose quiet was broken only by the deep, regular breathing of the sleeping man extended on the bed.

Once Hester rose and stole on tip-toe to look at her helpless enemy.

So may the treacherous wife of Heber, the Kenite, have looked at Sisera as he slept, gently putting aside the locks from his temple to make sure of the spot where the cruel nail should enter.

No nail or hammer had Hester in her strong white hands. Her vengeance took a different form and shape, for, as she bent above him, once more the vision of Geoffrey Stirling with gyves upon his wrists, with shorn head, and shameful felon's dress, came up before her mind, lighting her eyes with a cruel joy, parting the grand lines of her lips in a triumphant smile.

It has been said that in Hester the lust of vengeance blinded her to all her own shortcomings in the past. And now, no memory of her own sins against her husband jarred upon her sense of triumph—no memory of the scourge of bitter words laid on shrinking shoulders with pitiless severity visited her to-night.

She, a blameless, cruelly injured woman, was the avenger of a murdered man—that man the one thing on earth she had ever loved with passion; that man the lover of her youth, the husband of her womanhood; the man whose eyes had held hers with a spell of tender beseeching in the dear dead days; the man whose lips, meeting her own in a first long kiss, while all the gloaming around them was sweet with the fresh-cut hay, had taught her that the loveliest thing in life is love.

She never remembered Gabriel, when most she thirsted to avenge him, as the husband her jealous fancies had flouted and driven from her side—the man whose life and talents she had striven to grasp and crush. No! He always came before her memory as the dark-eyed lover of those halcyon days, when the light of his love was to her heart as the sunshine to the flowers; when the touch of his hand on hers made all the pulses of her blood beat with ineffable delight. Those days of half-uncertain bliss were the only days of tenderness and content her stormy nature had ever known. The strong element of selfishness in Hester's nature naturally prevented her finding that exquisite happiness in motherhood that it is given to some women to find, since mother-love, to be true and satisfying, must know no dross of self. Hilda had, hitherto, stood for but little in her mother's life; had appeared to her more in the guise of a creature under authority to be bent to her will, than a gift, God-given, to be loved and cherished.

Hester, bending over the fire, absorbed in thoughts of a day to come—a day in which all her greed of vengeance should be satisfied as some glutton at a lordly feast, had not bethought her to put out the lights that still flooded the room with a soft radiance. She had forgotten that they burned on, shimmering on the bed and its occupant, lighting up her own set face into a statuesque, transparent beauty.

But as she turned, swayed by some passing thought, towards the sick man's couch, she met his eyes—widely open—staring—and yet asleep.

A cold shudder passed through her as she met that stony, sightless gaze.

It was too like the ghastly, unblinking stare of dead eyes that once looked up to the sky above, as a dead man's head rested on her breast, and the water dripped down on to the drowned flowers from his heavy locks, not to fill her soul, brave woman as she was, with craven terror.

Meeting those eyes she knew they saw her not. Meeting them she knew they watched a world invisible save to themselves alone.

Another moment, and with a long shuddering groan Geoffrey Stirling has risen from his bed, and is standing grasping the foot-rail, a ghastly, awful figure, half of life, half of death—wholly of neither.

It is Hester who has set in motion the wheels of this horrible automaton; this thing that seems to move by clockwork without will of its own, and simply because a power beyond itself compels it.

The tortured brain, exalted to a pitch that savours of madness, even in sleep, exerts its autocratic power over the poor feeble body.

Colourless as that of the dead is the face of the sleep-walker; his lips are livid; and though they work convulsively now and again, no audible sound issues from them.

Hester seems spell-bound. She clings with both hands to the arm of her chair, and stares and stares at the slowly, mechanically moving figure that she dare not molest.

He has crossed the room, turning his head restlessly this way and that, as one who is watched, who fears pursuit. Yet is every movement not that of a sentient being, but of a thing governed by some ghastly power outside itself. Now he kneels by the old brass-bound coffer, and Hester, in her eagerness and terror, has risen, and bends forward, yet never quits her hold upon the chair.

The hands of the figure move softly and stealthily over the carved lid. There is a click, and the coffer-lid falls back.

Within lies, crumpled up, something in dead white folds, while seen against it is what looks like a gory patch.

With the same horrible mechanical precision as has marked all his former movements, Geoffrey Stirling has raised his hands towards the lappets of the flowered dressing-gown he wears, evidently with intent to divest himself of it, when he turns his head towards the further door that has opened slowly. Then his hands drop to his sides, and with a terrible wailing cry he struggles to his feet, and so stands with arms outstretched and head thrown back.

In a moment Davey's arms clasp him round; as easily as a mother lifts her babe he has borne his master to the bed, laid him tenderly thereon, and is bending over him.

"Give me some brandy, for God's sake—quick!" he cries.

He cannot stir himself, for Geoffrey's arms cling wildly about him, striving to pull him down, down, closer, closer to him.

"What is all this? What has happened? Was he walking in his sleep? Not undressed, too, and it is nearly morning!" says Davey, as he forces the brandy between his master's pallid lips. "You must have fallen into a doze," he continues.

And Hester herself, almost as pale as the sick man, acquiesces in this supposition, and strives to lend a hand in restoring the squire to life and consciousness.

"My God! is he dead?" cries Davey, his voice rising to a scream.

But Geoffrey Stirling hears that pitiful cry and tries to raise his head, tries to smile; at last—speaks.

"I am glad you are come, Davey. They said you had gone on a long journey. Do not leave me again."

"What is it, master? Oh, master, what ails you?" says Davey, sobbing like a woman.

As for Hester, she pulls the curtain of the bed into its place and shrinks behind it. All that Davey can see of her is one hand clutching the outer folds of the drapery as the hand of a drowning man might clutch a rope.

"I have had terrible dreams to-night," continues Geoffrey Stirling, never once letting go his hold of Davey, never once taking his eyes from the dear true face bending over him—his eyes that are no longer glassy and unseeing, but though strangely dim and sunken, are eyes that are sane and see what they look upon—"terrible dreams, Davey. I have been going over the same old weary road that I have traversed so often; but I think—I fancy—I have passed along it for the last time. Listen to me, Davey. Can you hear every word I say? Are you sure?"

"Every word. Master—master!" answers Davey, but cannot see his master's face for tears.

Geoffrey Stirling stretches himself upwards and backwards in Davey's arms.

"I have confessed—I do repent. Pray that God give me peace."

Bewildered, amazed, thinking his master still raves in delirium, Davey is tongue-tied, tear-blinded.

And still all he sees of Hester is the white hand clutching the curtain till the curtain shakes and trembles.

"It has been dragging me down, down to hell—the gold, Davey, the gold that was not mine to take! The tears and crying of the widow and the orphan have been tearing at my heart, maddening me, driving me to despair; but now—I do confess, I do repent. Pray God to give me peace!"

"I am praying, master—I am praying with all my heart."

"Hush! do you not hear the singers out in the night? Can you hear the words they sing? How sweet—how sweet it is!"

Frantic with fear, yet knowing not what to do, Davey supports the poor drooping head upon his breast, raising the worn figure higher and higher as breath seems to fail and life to ebb.

As he does so he sees a smile on the pale lips.

The eyes that were closed a moment before open widely, full of the bright sweetness that had once won the hearts of men.

"They are singing still," he says. "Davey, only hear them! Tell Ralph I was sorry not to wait until he came, but that I—couldn't stay. Tell him to make——"

That message is never finished. Death cuts the words in twain.

When Davey moves away from the bed where he has laid what once was Geoffrey Stirling tenderly and reverently down, Hester Devenant is standing by the open coffer.

As Davey comes to her side she bends over it, raises the thick white folds that fill it, and in silence looks at him.

"What does this mean?" gasps Davey, a terrible look of fear in his eyes, his heart beginning to labour in his breast.

"It means that Geoffrey Stirling was the ghost that walked in the shrubbery—it means that Geoffrey Stirling was the man who robbed the bank—it means that I, Hester Devenant, am—foiled!"

With this she breaks into harsh and bitter laughter, and Davey falls back from her as from some terrible thing he both loathes and fears.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLVIII. MR. PROSPER CHANGES HIS MIND.

WHEN Florence with her mother reached Cheltenham, she found a letter lying for her which surprised her much. The letter was from Harry, and seemed to have been written in better spirits than he had lately displayed. But it was very short:

"DEAREST FLORENCE, — When can I come down? It is absolutely necessary that I should see you. All my plans are likely to be changed in the most extraordinary manner. — Yours affectionately,

"H. A.

"Nobody can say that this is a love-letter."

Florence, of course, showed the letter to her mother, who was much frightened by its contents. "What am I to say to him when he comes?" she exclaimed.

"If you will be so very, very good as to see him, you must not say anything unkind."

"Unkind! How can I say anything else than what you would call unkind? I disapprove of him altogether. And he is coming here with the express object of taking you away from me."

"Oh! no; — not at once."

"But at some day — which I trust may be very distant. How can I speak to him kindly when I feel that he is my enemy?" But the matter was at last set at rest by a promise from Florence, that she would not marry her lover in less than three years without her mother's express consent. Three years is a long time, was Mrs. Mountjoy's thought, and many things might occur within that term. Harry, of whom she thought all manner of un-

natural things, might probably in that time have proved himself to be utterly unworthy. And Mountjoy Scarborough might again have come forward in the light of the world. She had heard of late that Mountjoy had been received once more into his father's full favour. And the old man had become so enormously rich through the building of mills which had been going on at Tretton, that, as Mrs. Mountjoy thought, he would be able to make any number of elder sons. On the subject of entail her ideas were misty; but she felt sure that Mountjoy Scarborough would even yet become a rich man. That Florence should be made to change on that account she did not expect. But she did think that when she should have learned that Harry was a murderer, or a midnight thief, or a wicked conspirator, she would give him up. Therefore she agreed to receive him with not actually expressed hostility, when he should call at Montpellier Place.

But now in the proper telling of our story we must go back to Harry Annesley himself. It will be remembered that his father had called upon Mr. Prosper, to inform him of Harry's projected journey to America; that Mountjoy Scarborough had also called at Buston Hall; and that previous to these two visits old Mr. Scarborough had himself written a long letter giving a detailed account of the conflict which had taken place in the London streets. These three events had operated strongly on Mr. Prosper's mind; but not so strongly as the conduct of Miss Thoroughbung and Messrs. Soames and Simpson. It had been made evident to him from the joint usage which he had received from these persons that he was simply "made use of" with the object of obtaining from him the best possible

establishment for the lady in question. After that interview, at which the lady, having obtained in way of jointure much more than was due to her, demanded also for Miss Tickle a life-long home, and for herself a pair of ponies, he received a further letter from the lawyers. This offended him greatly. Nothing on earth should induce him to write a line to Messrs. Soames and Simpson. Nor did he see his way to writing again to Messrs. Grey and Barry about such trifles as those contained in the letter from the Buntingford lawyers. Trifles to him they were not; but trifles they must become if put into a letter addressed to a London firm. "Our client is anxious to know specifically that she is to be allowed to bring Miss Tickle with her, when she removes to Buston Hall. Her happiness depends greatly on the company of Miss Tickle, to which she has been used now for many years. Our client wishes to be assured also that she shall be allowed to keep a pair of ponies in addition to the carriage-horses which will be maintained no doubt chiefly for your own purposes." These were the demands as made by Messrs. Soames and Simpson, and felt by Mr. Prosper to be altogether impossible. He recollected the passionate explosion of wrath to which the name of Miss Tickle had already brought him in the presence of the clergyman of his parish. He would endure no further disgrace on behalf of Miss Tickle. Miss Tickle should never be an inmate of his house, and as for the ponies, no pony should ever be stabled in his stalls. A pony was an animal which of its very nature was objectionable to him. There was a want of dignity in a pony to which Buston Hall should never be subjected. "And also," he said to himself at last, "there is a lack of dignity about Miss Thoroughbung herself which would do me an irreparable injury."

But how should he make known his decision to the lady herself, and how should he escape from the marriage in such a manner as to leave no stain on his character as a gentleman? If he could have offered her a sum of money, he would have done so at once; but that he thought would not be gentlemanlike;—and would be a confession on his own part that he had behaved wrongly.

At last he determined to take no notice of the lawyers' letter, and himself to write to Miss Thoroughbung, telling her that the objects which they proposed to themselves

by marriage were not compatible; and that therefore their matrimonial intentions must be allowed to subside. He thought it well over, and felt assured that very much of the success of such a measure must depend upon the wording of the letter. There need be no immediate haste. Miss Thoroughbung would not come to Buston again quite at once to disturb him by a further visit. Before she would come, he would have flown to Italy. The letter must be courteous, and somewhat tender; but it must be absolutely decisive. There must be no loophole left by which she could again entangle him; no crevice by which she could creep into Buston! The letter should be a work of time. He would give himself a week or ten days for composing it. And then when it should have been sent, he would be off to Italy.

But before he could allow himself to go upon his travels, he must settle the question about his nephew, which now lay heavy upon his conscience. He did feel that he had ill-treated the young man. He had been so told in very strong language by Mr. Scarborough of Tretton, and Mr. Scarborough of Tretton was a man of very large property, and much talked about in the world. Very wonderful things were said about Mr. Scarborough, but they all tended to make Mr. Prosper believe that he was a man of distinction. And he had also heard lately about Mr. Scarborough's younger son,—or, indeed, his only son, according to the new way of speaking of him,—tidings which were not much in that young man's favour. It was from Augustus Scarborough that he had heard those evil stories about his own nephew. Therefore his belief was shaken; and it was by no means clear to him that there could be any other heir for their property. Miss Thoroughbung had proved herself to be altogether unfit for the high honour he had intended her. Miss Puffle had gone off with Farmer Tazlehurst's son. Mr. Prosper did not think that he had energy enough to look for a third lady who might be fit at all points to become his wife. And now another evil had been added to all these. His nephew had declared his purpose of emigrating to the United States, and becoming an American. It might be true that he should be driven to do so by absolute want. He, Mr. Prosper, had stopped his allowance, and had done so after deterring him from following any profession by which he might have earned his bread. He had looked

into the law, and, as far as he could understand it, Buston must become the property of his nephew, even though his nephew should become an American citizen. His conscience pricked him sorely as he thought of the evil which might thus accrue, and of the disgrace which would be attached to his own name. He therefore wrote the following letter to his nephew, and sent it across to the parsonage, done up in a large envelope, and sealed carefully with the Buston arms. And on the corner of the envelope, "Peter Prosper" was written very legibly.

"MY DEAR NEPHEW, HENRY ANNESLEY, —Under existing circumstances you will, I think, be surprised at a letter written in my handwriting; but facts have arisen which make it expedient that I should address you.

"You are about, I am informed, to proceed to the United States, a country against which I acknowledge I entertain a serious antipathy. They are not a gentlemanlike people, and I am given to understand that they are generally dishonest in all their dealings. Their president is a low person, and all their ideas of government are pettifogging. Their ladies, I am told, are very vulgar, though I have never had the pleasure of knowing one of them. They are an irreligious nation, and have no respect for the established Church of England and her bishops. I should be very sorry that my heir should go among them.

"With reference to my stopping the income which I have hitherto allowed you, it was a step I took upon the best advice, nor can I allow it to be thought that there is any legal claim upon me for a continuance of the payment. But I am willing for the present to continue it on the full understanding that you at once give up your American project.

"But there is a subject on which it is essentially necessary that I should receive from you as my heir a full and complete explanation. Under what circumstances did you beat Captain Scarborough in the streets late on the night of the 3rd of June last? And how did it come to pass that you left him bleeding, speechless, and motionless on that occasion?

"As I am about to continue the payment of the sum hitherto allowed, I think it only fitting that I should receive this explanation under your own hand.—I am your affectionate uncle, PETER PROSPER.

"P.S.—A rumour may probably have

reached you of a projected alliance between me and a young lady belonging to a family with which your sister is about to connect herself. It is right that I should tell you that there is no truth in this report."

This letter, which was much easier to write than the one intended for Miss Thoroughbung, was unfortunately sent off a little before the completion of the other. A day's interval had been intended. But the missive to Miss Thoroughbung was, under the press of difficulties, delayed longer than was intended.

There was, we grieve to say, much of joy, but more of laughter at the rectory when this letter was received. As usual, Joe Thoroughbung was there, and it was found impossible to keep the letter from him. The postscript burst upon them all as a surprise, and was welcomed by no one with more vociferous joy than by the lady's nephew. "So there is an end for ever to the hope that a child of the Buntingford Brewery should sit upon the throne of the Prospera." It was thus that Joe expressed himself.

"Why shouldn't he have sat there?" said Polly. "A Thoroughbung is as good as a Prosper any day." But this was not said in the presence of Mrs. Annesley, who on that subject entertained views very different from her daughter.

"I wonder what his idea is of the Church of England," said Mr. Annesley. "Does he think that the Archbishop of Canterbury is supreme in all religious matters in America?"

"How on earth he knows that the women are all vulgar when he has never seen one of them is a mystery," said Harry.

"And that they are dishonest in all their dealings!" said Joe. "I suppose he got that out of some of the radical newspapers." For Joe, after the manner of brewers, was a staunch Tory.

"And their president, too, is vulgar as well as the ladies!" said Mr. Annesley. "And this is the opinion of an educated Englishman, who is not ashamed to own that he entertains serious antipathies against a whole nation!"

But at the parsonage they soon returned to a more serious consideration of the matter. Did Uncle Prosper intend to forgive the sinner altogether? And was he coerced into doing so by a conviction that he had been told lies, or by the uncommon difficulties which presented themselves to him in reference to another heir? At any rate it was agreed to by them all

that Harry must meet his uncle half way, and write the "full and complete explanation" as desired. "Bleeding, speechless, and motionless!" said Harry. "I can't deny that he was bleeding; he certainly was speechless; and for a few moments may have been motionless. What am I to say?" But the letter was not a difficult one to write, and was sent across on the same day to the Hall. There Mr. Prosper gave up a day to its consideration; a day which would have been much better devoted to applying the final touch to his own letter to Miss Thoroughbung. And he found at last that his nephew's letter required no rejoinder.

But Harry had much to do. It was first necessary that he should see his friend, and explain to him that causes over which he had no control forbade him to go to America. "Of course, you know, I can't fly in my uncle's face. I was going because he intended to disinherit me; but he finds that more troublesome than letting me alone, and therefore I must remain. You see what he says about the Americans." The gentleman, whose opinion about our friends on the other side of the Atlantic was very different from Mr. Prosper's, fell into a long argument on the subject. But he was obliged at last to give up his companion.

Then came the necessity of explaining the change in all his plans to Florence Mountjoy, and with this view he wrote the short letter given at the beginning of the chapter, following it down in person to Cheltenham. "Mamma, Harry is here," said Florence to her mother.

"Well, my dear! I did not bring him."

"But what am I to say to him?"

"How can I tell? Why do you ask me?"

"Of course he must come and see me," said Florence. "He has sent a note to say that he will be here in ten minutes."

"Oh dear! oh dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Mountjoy.

"Do you mean to be present, mamma? That is what I want to know." But that was the question which at the moment Mrs. Mountjoy could not answer. She had pledged herself not to be unkind, on condition that no marriage should take place for three years. But she could not begin by being kind, as otherwise she would immediately have been pressed to abandon that very condition. "Perhaps, mamma, it would be less painful if you would not see him."

"But he is not to make repeated visits."

"No; not at present; I think not."

"He must come only once," said Mrs. Mountjoy firmly. "He was to have come because he was going to America. But now he has changed all his plans. It isn't fair, Florence."

"What can I do? I cannot send him to America because you thought that he was to go there. I thought so too; and so did he. I don't know what has changed him; but it wasn't likely that he'd write and say he wouldn't come because he had altered his plans. Of course he wants to see me;—and so do I want to see him,—very much. Here he is!"

There was a ring at the bell, and Mrs. Mountjoy was driven to resolve what she would do at the moment. "You mustn't be above a quarter of an hour. I won't have you together for above a quarter of an hour,—or twenty minutes at the furthest." So saying, Mrs. Mountjoy escaped from the room, and within a minute or two Florence found herself in Harry Annesley's arms.

The twenty minutes had become forty before Harry had thought of stirring, although he had been admonished fully a dozen times that he must at that moment take his departure. Then the maid knocked at the door, and brought word "that missus wanted to see Miss Florence in her bedroom."

"Now, Harry, you must go. You really shall go,—or I will. I am very, very happy to hear what you have told me."

"But three years!"

"Unless mamma will agree."

"It is quite out of the question. I never heard anything so absurd."

"Then you must get mamma to consent. I have promised her for three years, and you ought to know that I will keep my word. Harry, I always keep my word; do I not? If she will consent, I will. Now, sir, I really must go." Then there was a little form of farewell which need not be especially explained, and Florence went upstairs to her mother.

A BIT OF AN OLD STORY.

DOES a true drama of human life ever work to a climax and end fittingly? Does one romance in a million reach any end whatever, save interruption and oblivion? I fear not. Poetic justice, so my own experience tells, is confined to poetic pro-

cesses, and the only romance which terminates properly is that which began unperceived, unimagined, and unstudied. I have had occasion to observe many dramatic commencements and many dramatic conclusions. But all, though more or less effective of themselves, were disconnected.

Two years ago I told the story of a mantelpiece in my possession, how I ordered it from a potter in Multan, and how I gave him directions for an inscription which he did not follow.* When the object reached me, though it was pretty enough, I found that the Persian words were not those I had ordered. Upon enquiry I learned that the Sunni fanatics of Multan raised a riot against my potter—a Shiah and a Persian—and smashed his stock. Foremost among the malefactors was an Afridi Pathan, whom avenging neighbours pursued. He took refuge in a garden and fell asleep. Heavenly beings appeared to him there, and when he woke he found two bracelets on his chest. The Afridi was arrested that night for his share in the disturbance, and in court he produced these jewels, of beauty more than human artificers can fashion, as he showed. They were his glory and his defence. Allah approved his deed, and it was for earthly governors to bow.

The magistrate did not question Allah's authority, but he impounded the bracelets. A rich merchant of the town chanced to be in court. His change of face when they were handed round drew the magistrate's attention, but he steadily denied all knowledge of them. This mystery remained undecided. For his disorderly conduct the prisoner was sentenced to a month's hard labour, and three months more in default of his share towards compensating the potter. Meantime, the bracelets were handed to Sayyid Farid-ud-din for exposure in some public but sacred place, where the owner might recognise them, if earthly owner they had. Farid-ud-din was chief of the moollahs who attend the Bahawal Hak, the tomb of the great Multan saint.

So rested matters when I told my story. Friends whom I had begged to keep me informed, wrote that the things remained without a claimant when Zahad recovered liberty. No further news reached me, and I supposed that this romance, as usual, had broken off at the end of the first chapter.

But on returning from Egypt the other day, I found a continuation, very welcome, though it did not upset my sad theory.

On his return from jail, Zahad hastened to demand his blessed prize. Imprisonment had left him no sense of disgrace. It is the function of magistrates to persecute. Zahad was fresh from his mountain home, a shrewd and resolute young giant, quite unacquainted with civilisation. He was not religious—few Pathans are; but superstitious, and fanatical, and overbearing, as are all his kin. Islam is less a creed for them than a banner and a token. But for it they are glad to die.

Farid-ud-din dwelt in a ruinous but substantial mansion by the Fort. The Bahawal Hak, of which he was chief guardian, stands within the fortified enceinte, but the old gates were never closed at this time. With difficulty Zahad obtained an audience, for he was ragged and dirty. But the Sayyid's tone changed when he understood who was his visitor. He abandoned his air of lofty unconcern, uncrossed his legs, and descended with grave and respectful salaams; conducted Zahad to the corner seat of the divan, and called for coffee.

"The blessed bracelets," said he, "are safe in the Bahawal Hak, lying upon the sacred tomb itself. All the faithful reverence them! Be not puffed up, oh, youth! nor disdain the counsels of the aged. When I heard of this event, I sought in prayer and deep reflection why you should have been favoured above all the pious of the city. The Merciful One heard my anxious communings, and he revealed his purpose. Great and dangerous service it is your privilege to render Islam, oh, Zahad Afridi!"

"Tell me Heaven's will, oh, Sayyid!" exclaimed the Pathan fervently. "Though it lead me through flame and blood I will pursue it!"

"It is written that he who wins heavenly favour walks along the edge of hell! Allah has signalled you out for his service, and beware of slackness! Listen, my son! The infidels are full of boasting and vanity, under the accursed English rule! Beside our holy tomb stands their idol-house, where the dogs worship wood and stone. Our forefathers destroyed it again and again, but for money and for the revenue it produces they allowed it to be restored. Allah has judged them! Ranjit Singh, that Shaitan, turned it into a magazine, and the English blew it up when Mulraj

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 25, p. 343, "A Traveller's Tales. A Mantelpiece."

Mal Khan—whose name is grateful!—defended the city. Under protection of the Christians the infidels rebuilt it, and deluded Kaffirs from every part swelled their torments hereafter by subscribing to make it glorious exceedingly. There is now a scheme afoot of incredible profanity. Those children of the Devil point the finger at our sacred shrine. They say, 'The Faithful One, Sheikh Baha-ud-din—in whose name all the world finds peace!—lies under a lofty dome, whilst our foul and degraded idol-house is flat. Let us arise and bestir ourselves! The accursed English are our friends and fellow dogs! There are great and rich men of our shameful persuasion who will find us money before passing to their doom! Let us build a spire ten times as high as the dome of Bahawal Hak! So all the world shall see that our gods of human manufacture trample upon holy Islam, and laugh at the Faithful!' That is their project, oh, my son!"

Zahad started up.

"Where is this idol-house? Where are the vile unbelievers?"

"Stay, stay, impetuous youth! Nothing yet is done! They are gathering the money and the stones, collecting masons, preparing designs. There is time to warn them that if they persist in this unparalleled wickedness, brave men and pious will sacrifice their lives before it shall succeed. To give them such notice is your first task."

Zahad undertook it at once. He learned that a certain Manich Chanda was the most zealous advocate of the scheme. His blood aglow at this threatened insult to the faith, the Afridi rose.

"Give me the heavenly jewels," he said, "and I will be doing!"

"Nay, my son! Had the All-Wise designed you should have them now, how should the Collector-sahib have taken them from you? They are a promise, not a reward as yet. You may see and adore them as do others, fervently, in this desperate time, but such an inestimable gift has still to be deserved."

Zahad flared with rage sudden and deadly, but the Sayyid put out his hands, and repeated the Feteha, the Beginning, that verse of utmost sanctity which awes the faithful hearer though he be mad with passion. Zahad went out fuming, and made his way to the house of Manich Chanda. The merchant was away on business, and his servants, insultingly suspicious of

the big ragged Pathan, would not say when their master was expected. In fierce passion Zahad strode away. As he passed the corner of the house a scarf fluttered down from the balcony, and lightly veiled his head.

Manich Chanda lived in a great blank house, gaudy here and there with paint half-effaced. Its windowless wall occupied one side the alley. Within and above its high portal, carvings and fretted ornaments of wood, cut almost as fine as lace in designs of intricate beauty, alone suggested the wealth inside. Opposite stood another gateway, as elaborate and as lofty; but the walls that held it were broken and weed-grown, surrounding piles of rubbish that had once been a stately house. Its demolition gave the sunrays access to the overhanging balconies, of exquisite woodwork, that adorned the upper storey of Manich Chanda's dwelling. It was a glorious burst of light in the shadowed alley. Above and lower down, such balconies almost met from either side, and the sky was a narrow strip between. At the end lay an expanse, bathed in blinding sunshine, with market-people in a thousand tints of drapery. And beyond, above them, towered the lofty gate, pink in the sun, black in the shadow, its opening filled with the living green of trees beyond the moat.

No soul was visible in the dark alley. Zahad took the scarf with awe, and stood, his lithe figure poised, his blue eyes interrogating Heaven with rapture. That this was a second sign he never thought of doubting. He did not glance at the balcony overhead. Had he done so, not even his hawk-eyes could have pierced the small gaps of delicate tracery, behind which two girls watched him, laughing and trembling. No hint of Allah's meaning descended from the radiant sky. Zahad examined the celestial scarf. It was not less beautiful than the bracelets, not less evidently work beyond human skill. So light and soft was the material that he could crumple it all up between his palms; the gold woven cunningly in its texture alone gave it weight to fall.

Zahad found voice. As he feverishly twisted the holy object round his head he recited prayers. And then he strode towards the light and throng, with the gait of one who has a mission from on high. His cries grew louder. "Lah-ullah ul-lah-hu!" he yelled, bursting from the alley mouth.

An officer-sahib was riding by; with a quick movement he hitched his revolver more convenient to the hand, and undid the strap. The market-people gathered about Zahad in alarm and curiosity. An old Sikh policeman pushed to the front.

"None of that, Afridi!" he remarked in his equivalent for the familiar warning of our "Bobby," "or I shall run you in!"

"You will run me in, dog! Me, the chosen of Allah! Listen to it, ye faithful! Lah-ullah ul-lah-hu!"

The Afridi had no weapon, and the old Sikh cared little for his inches and his flaming eyes—he had faced such in youth, and had seen them cower and dim before the steady press of the soldiers of the Khalsa. Without more words he closed. Other police came running up. Zahad snatched a steel-yard from a booth close by, and slung its heavy weight round his head with giant strength. The policemen stood an instant. Zahad yelled without ceasing, and whirled his tremendous club. The crowd, three-fourths Moslem, began to take fire. "Lah-ullah!" many cried, and the ominous "Din! din!" began to mutter. It was an anxious time at Multan in the beginning of last year. The officer spurred his horse, broke through, and rained cutting blows on the Afridi with his heavy riding-whip.

Zahad was brave and high-spirited like all his race. At this moment he felt within him all the strength of Heaven's support. But for such attack he was not prepared. A very young man, brought up with severe home-discipline, yields by instinct to the whip, though swords and bullets would not daunt him. Quick as a pulse-beat he would have recovered his presence of mind, but in the moment's hesitation the police sprang forward and bore him down.

Next day he appeared again before the court, on a charge of disorderly conduct in the market-place. The sense of divine protection rather failed him now. He perceived and humbly admitted to himself that he had made a mess of it somehow. Sayyid Farid-ud-din stood amongst the audience, and his grave face poured rebuke upon the prisoner.

The magistrate delivered a lecture which Zahad heard in silence, his head erect; wherever lay the mistake, this Kaffir knew nothing about it. He was fined two rupees, and bound over to keep the peace. Zahad did not own a cownie or a friend, but a householder unknown to him stepped

forward, and did all that was necessary. When discharged, the Afridi asked for his scarf. Nobody had seen it. He began to make a disturbance, but the police closed in, the unknown friend took his arm, and Zahad submitted, crestfallen and despairing. He said not a word, but his sighs were of that volume the Oriental alone can heave, and he walked in semi-consciousness. What unprecedented torments would be allotted in the other world to one who had enjoyed such blessed grace and had proved himself unworthy by acts of thoughtless indiscretion!

They reached the Sayyid's house and found him just within the door, as to receive an honoured guest. Zahad threw himself on the ground.

"Well said you, holy man, that he who is favoured by Heaven walks along the brink of hell. I may not sit beside the lowest of the Faithful. Let me lie in the dust."

The Sayyid did not press the point. He sat on the divan whilst Zahad lay along the floor, and probably he thought that their respective positions were quite fitting. With great interest he heard of the new manifestation, and pondered it gravely.

"Allah has indeed marked you for great deeds," he said, "but not yet. Go to Gujrat and meditate in solitude six months. I will give you letters to Pir Shah Daula, the sainted recluse, who dwells in Gujrat. I will give you also money for the journey. Stay with that holiest of men until it is revealed to me to send for you. Go to-night."

"May I look upon the bracelets?"

"You may hold them in your hand whilst I myself conduct the evening service."

The day was not Friday, and innovation on the fixed ceremonial of Islam is so rare that Zahad thrilled again. They went together to the Bawahal Hak. The heavenly tokens, wrapped in a cloth of gold, were placed in Zahad's hands, and the Sayyid took his station at the mihrab. News of the strange event had spread, and the mosque was crowded. What feverish visions and what agonising fears alternated in the Afridi's soul I am not equal to imagining. The words recited by the priest were unintelligible to him as to all others, but they were sounds that stirred the blood by fervid association. And then Farid-ud-din ascended the minber to preach. His sermon differed only from those the Faithful heard every week by a grander style and an air of significance not less impressive

because vague. He spoke of the glorious time when this city was a bulwark of the faith; when the infidel, though magnanimously suffered to live, dwelt in subjection and reverence. He alluded to the persecution of the Sikh conquerors, which many of his audience fired to remember, and he cautiously hinted that times of still greater humiliation might be at hand unless the Moslem turned zealously to Allah and his Prophet, who had promised that none should prevail against those who kept the faith. As he finished, every eye was glowing, every heart burning with passion. Most of those present knew what infidel schemes were referred to, and they vowed, in whispers and sobs, then in hysterical shouting, that the Moslem would ail perish before their saint's dome should be overtopped by an idolatrous spire.

That night Zahad departed for Gujrat, and he dwelt for six months with Pir Shah Daula. The later time was one continued ecstatic trance. When, after long penance, the saint declared that Heaven was mollified, forthwith Zahad began to experience delights unknown. He saw and he felt the joys reserved for the Faithful after death—the flowers of unearthly fragrance, the black-eyed girls of beauty more than human, the majestic poetry of angels' converse, the light of the very sun itself, the jewels and gold; above all, the thrilling sense of life immortal won by virtue and devotion. Then he learned for a truth that this lower world is nothing, its pleasures and its pains of equal unimportance, contemptible alike. To him, in this frame of mind, came one day the order to return to Multan.

The Hindoos had been active there and successful. Their co-religionists had subscribed, masons and materials had been collected; the walls of the temple had been strengthened to bear an enormous increase of weight. The Mahomedan population had petitioned Government against this sacrilege. They had gathered outside the Collector-sahib's compound, and shouted threats. Government was alarmed and embarrassed. But it could not stultify the principles on which its rule is based, by denying to one religion a dignity accorded to the other. It could only return warning for menace, increase the garrison, keep the police alert, and wait for overt acts.

The population of Multan, Hindoo and Mussulman alike, have been in all time noted for the heat and obstinacy of their religious convictions. No district of India

has suffered persecution so frequent and so severe, nor has any endured its fate with such ferocious obstinacy. Although the Mahomedans have been supreme for seven centuries and a half, they have never daunted the fanaticism of the subject race. Again and again riots and outrages against holy Islam have caused an indiscriminate massacre. On one occasion, Aurungzeb, out of all patience, ordered ten thousand Hindoos to be slain, and the order was zealously obeyed; but upon his death disturbances began again. Nowhere else in India has Brahminism shown such spirit, though every district has its legend of heroic stubbornness. A prudent fear of English magistrates, who do not massacre, but prosaically hang and fine, imprison and transport to the Andamans, have kept fanatics in awe more or less since the annexation. The police have promptly suppressed little rows and demonstrations which would have gathered force until they set the town ablaze. But in this matter of raising a spire on Prahladpuri Temple, Hindoos stood within the law, though they acted in the old spirit, knowing well that a storm would rise.

Zahad made his way to the Sayyid's house through streets thronged with Moslem, sullen and threatening, Hindoos exulting and defiant. No blow had yet been struck, but desperate elements were mustering. Excited groups of leading Moslem stood about Farid-ud-din's door. Zahad learned that the holy man had been summoned by the Collector-sahib an hour ago. He waited until the Sayyid came back with a train of Faithful. After these he pressed in with many others. When the small room below and the court-yard were full, Farid-ud-din made a speech, which those could hear who could not see the orator.

He said in brief: "I waited on the Collector-sahib; the General-sahib was with him. The Collector called on me to preserve the peace. I answered, 'How shall I control the Faithful when their livers are inflamed with a sense of wrong? I have no soldiers.' The Collector-sahib replied: 'They have no wrongs, and if they think they have, it is you and your fellows who have irritated them. This is no time, oh, Sayyid, for a delicate choice of words. The Sircar has been watching you, and if disturbances follow, it knows whom to hold responsible.' What a monstrous charge, ye Faithful! Have I urged any of you to seek justice for outraged Islam by

means other than legal? I said to the Collector-sahib: 'My enemies have abused your candour, oh, father of the people! The Faithful of Multan need no hints or guiding when their holy places are insulted. I, on the contrary, have done my best to restrain their pious indignation. We know the English rule—it is heavy on Islam, but not unjust.' He answered: 'I have spoken!' And the General-sahib added: 'I warn you that my soldiers, Moslem and Poorbeah, will shoot without distinction, let who will begin the riot! And do you look to it, oh, Sayyid, for a green turban will be no safety.' So the General-sahib spoke in contempt of that colour which marks me, unworthy as I am, for a descendant of the Blessed One. But since such is the tone of the powerful, in the hearing of you all, I adjure the Faithful to disperse and go quietly to their homes, relying on the justice and tenderness and respect of the Sircar towards Islam, which have been long apparent to all who can see, and are now plain even to the blind. Go quietly, friends! Allah does not need your arms. He can avenge himself by ways mysterious to our feeble minds. Go in confidence."

The crowd filed away, murmuring a significant acquiescence. They belonged to a class which naturally prefers to entrust its cause to Heaven, if that may be done decently, rather than make disturbances. Zahad remained in his place. After awhile, those intimate friends departed who had stayed whispering with the Sayyid. They looked at the Afridi curiously, but did not speak to him.

Then Farid-ud-din came up with a weary air. His foot was on the steps leading to the upper storey, when Zahad called his attention. He hurriedly turned back. "When did you arrive? Have you shown yourself in the street? Come up!" The Sayyid added, glancing round suspiciously: "The moment of your devotion is at hand! Hush!"

They went up the stairs, passed round the central well which looked on the court below—protected by a balustrade of dainty carving—and through several apartments. The magnificence of them struck Zahad with awe. To us they would have seemed close and unwholesome, tawdrily furnished, though many of the odd articles were lovely and tasteful in themselves. To a rich Hindoo they would have seemed commonplace. But the Afridi was amazed. Such things as he saw there on earth were the plenishing of Heaven in his dreams.

Twice a door opened suddenly, and a girl-child's joyful face appeared. At sight of a stranger it vanished in alarm, and Zahad heard merry chatter, but his quick mountain eye remarked jewels, gold-wrought silks, and dainty luxury scarce, as he thought, terrestrial.

They reached a distant chamber, and then, after such words as roused the Afridi blood, the Sayyid disclosed his plan. It was radical. He suggested that Zahad should blow up Prahladpuri Temple, with means and under circumstances arranged with minute skill which could scarcely fail. Zahad consented with enthusiasm to play his part, and his host left him, sending in choice food by an ancient slave-woman.

But, although the Afridi agreed with warmth, he was conscious that the proposal would have been otherwise acceptable a few days before. He had no longer real delight in the idea of risking his life for the glory of Islam. The direct influence of Allah, so to speak, had vanished from the undertaking, which became an operation of mere war. As such the Afridi welcomed it, but there are neither houris nor ecstasies of devotion in such work. And as the hours passed by, this sense of disillusion grew stronger. Zahad had been used to sleep a great deal under the saint's tuition, and his dreams had been divine. Whilst his eyes were open, and his senses abnormally keen, he enjoyed broken visions. But now he could not sleep, he had no waking visions. The desire of his body was to lie still, and his mind was flat as his limbs.

Two days he endured this misery; then he confided his state to Farid-ud-din. If only he could get abroad for a few hours to enjoy the sunshine and the crowd, it seemed to the imprisoned mountaineer that he would be all himself. The Sayyid would not hear of this—too grave interests were at stake, and the police too busy. He preferred to try medicine, and his remedies were potent. Zahad felt again the enthusiasm and the self-devotion which had thrilled him. He penetrated to the throne of Allah's self, and saw the utmost joys accorded to the Ghazi, the martyr. They were too keen for endurance. After raving and bounding in his cell, he rushed out and created dire alarm through the purdah. Farid-ud-din was powerless to control the fervid young giant. Consigning his household to remote and most uncomfortable places

of concealment, he left Zahad free to roam through the mansion. And after awhile, when he had ransacked the place in a strange frame of shrewd observation and mystic extravagance, the Afridi fell asleep. He awoke infinitely more wretched than before, so depressed and incredulous that he thought his whole story an illusion. In pure alarm, the Sayyid consented to let his prisoner out for a few hours.

Events had ripened during the latter days. The building of the spire had actually begun, and the Moslem were waiting in despair, the Hindoos in confidence, for the Government's final answer upon the question of right. It was expected that afternoon, and a disturbance would so certainly follow, whatever the decision, that troops had been moved from the cantonment, and posted in central spots.

Towards evening a rumour spread. The Lieutenant-Governor in Council had considered the Moslem protest, and given a final reply. The Hindoos stood within their legal right in embellishing Prahladpuri at their own cost. The Government would restrain any attempt to outrage Mahomedan feeling, and it invited the Faithful to await with patience its action in this matter.

Then the streets cleared suddenly. As by a word of command, the Moslem slipped away, and the Hindoos, finding no one to quarrel with, retired in some bewilderment. Zahad roamed about till dusk. Then he betook himself, ready and determined, but unenthusiastic, to the Sayyid's house. He passed many little knots of his co-religionists, eagerly whispering and collecting. It was dark when he reached the alley where the last of Allah's manifestations was revealed. There he was stopped by police and questioned. Whilst replying impatiently, a sudden uproar distracted the enquirers. A turn of the roadway hid Manich Chanda's house, but the noise came from that quarter. The police broke away, and Zahad followed. Before they got sight of the building, a little column of townsmen burst from a side passage, beat down the police with sticks, and ran along. Round the next turning they fell amongst a swarm of raving Moslem, who occupied the narrow wynd in a mass compact. Too closely pressed to advance, they shook their bludgeons in a swarthy flare of torches, crying, "Din ! din ! Lah-Allah-hu !" The spirit of the scene stirred the Afridi's blood. His height, his long arms and tough muscles, forced Zahad a way through the

outlying mass. He came near the door, not unbruised. Here was collected wilder material than the city could furnish—Scindhis from the desert, Pathans and Beloochis, whose eyes gleamed through tangles of long hair, wet with perspiration. They all carried arms, and they yelled in frenzy.

Round the entrance was motion still more vehement. Great hammers whirled and thundered on the massive door. With a roar and a crash it gave way, and Zahad was carried in. There was no resistance, nor any living thing in the house. By ways prepared in times more habitually perilous, every soul had got away. The building was rummaged from top to bottom in an instant, chests smashed, apartments stripped, and all that was moveable trampled or carried off. Those who entered first, the Pathans and Beloochis, understand looting as a science, and they did the business thoroughly in a few moments. Two cries, repeated by a thousand voices, disturbed them. It was a scream of "Fire !" within the house, and of "Soldiers !" outside. All tumbled headlong down the stairs, disposing their plunder as they went.

Zahad was among the last. As he ran from an apartment of the purdah—the harem—he saw a big Belooch escaping with a bundle. From an aperture therein trailed his blessed scarf ! Zahad recognised it at a glance and sprang on the looter. Explanations were not asked nor offered. The Belooch, a heavier man, almost as tall, sustained the shock, but he had no time to draw a weapon. Clutching each other like wild beasts, rolling and roaring and rending with their teeth, they struggled amongst gathering smoke in a horrid din.

Moslem and Hindoo were fighting outside, whilst the soldiers, with fixed bayonets, drove all before them, and the police made indiscriminate arrests. The street was cleared in three minutes, and a score of daring fellows bounded up the staircase. At the same instant the Belooch came whirling down, head foremost. Zahad followed him, clutching the bundle. And presently they were both conveyed to the guard-room on stretchers.

The rest of the tale may be summarised very shortly.

The Belooch died, and half-a-dozen witnesses deposed that they saw Zahad pitch him downstairs. To the magistrate's eye the case was simple. Two plunderers had quarrelled, and one had murdered the

other. Zahad was convicted. To the question what he had to say before receiving doom, he answered vehemently: "The Belooch was found in possession of a scarf which Allah had let fall from the sky as a special mark of favour." And so on.

The judge interrupted. He said:

"This is not the first time, prisoner, that you have pleaded a similar hallucination. Last year it was some Delhi bracelets which mysteriously reached you in a dream. Now you justify yourself by an incredible story about a scarf. If I could admit you sincere in believing that these things were gifts of Allah, the simplest enquiry would have disabused you. The bracelets are before me. They speak for themselves—a dozen like them might be bought any day in the bazaar. To make certainty doubly certain, here is the mark of a well-known jeweller. The scarf is Dacca muslin, embroidered by hand. In a score of houses you will find such articles——"

"No, no, sahib," cried the Afridi, distracted. "It cannot be. I myself saw——"

"Summon an expert," ordered the judge, "and Manich Chanda."

Manich Chanda drew the attention of all by his confusion when interrogated about this simple matter. But when asked generally if the scarf was not a common pattern of Scind embroidery, he eagerly replied that in all rich purdahs such articles are common. And the expert, a Moslem, only glanced at the bracelets before declaring that he recognised them. They were brought from Delhi by a confrère, who told him casually that he had sold them to Manich Chanda. This statement made sensation. Zahad was overwhelmed. He sank down in the dock and heard no more. Had this evidence been brought at the first trial, he would have laughed in simple scorn. But it confirmed dim suspicions, unacknowledged and unshaped, which had been forming in his mind.

After a pause, the judge continued:

"You have been convicted, prisoner, upon the clearest evidence. I shall instruct competent persons to enquire into your state of mind. But my duty now is to condemn you to penal servitude for ten years."

Zahad paid no attention.

The doctors declared him of sound mind. He is now in the Andaman Islands, noted in the prison-books as "dangerous."

Manich Chanda suffered for his daugh-

ters' silly freak. For years he had been out of caste, paying the penalty of a youthful voyage to Europe. It was this misfortune which caused all the others, for Hindoo girls brought up among the decencies of caste life would rather die than notice a Moslem, much more leave him gifts. But Manich Chanda had fair hopes of reinstatement at a price. For this end he had subscribed largely to the fund for raising a spire on Prahladpuri, and had taken the most active part in collecting money. The disclosures of the trial ruined him and his daughters beyond hope. He is the richest citizen and the most miserable in Multan. They remain single.

The riots had their course. After a week of most intolerable disorder, the town was formally occupied, but a certainty of defeat and punishment did not stop the fighting. At length the leading people on both sides felt their religious enthusiasm cool before the stagnation of business. Through the mediation of the Commissioner they reached an agreement. Prahladpuri Temple was to be embellished with a spire, but only thirty-three feet high. It is just finished. The Hindoos were to have a well dug at the municipal expense, and they waived their claim to draw at the holy Moslem fount.

TOWTON ROSES.

LOCAL LEGEND.

WHERE Lancaster's last stake was set,
Against the proud Plantagenet;
Where the red rose and the white,
Flaunted o'er the furious fight;
Where, in mock of brotherhood
Kindred ranked 'gainst kindred stood,
Once to meet, nor part again;
Raged the war on Towton Plain.
There the squadrons charged and wheeled,
There the rival war-cries pealed
There, amid the roar and rattle,
Of the long and desperate battle,
English all, the maddened foes,
Saw the long day dawn and close,
Ere King Henry's cause was sped,
'Neath the roses, white and red.

Full four hundred varying years,
Have passed with change of smiles and tears,
Since names of York and Lancaster,
Bade men's pulses leap and stir.
Calm beneath the northern skies,
All the plain of Towton lies,
Where the lark sings, blithe and clear,
In the morning of the year,
Where the merry beck is flowing;
And the joyous winds are blowing,
Echoes from the moor and hill;
Very peaceful, very still,
Lies the field of battle, spread,
With clustering roses, white and red.

Yorkshire airs are hard and cold,
Keen the blasts from Yorkshire wold,
Nor biting frost, nor drifting snow,
Kill the roses' roots below;

Drive the plough, and sow the soil,
Spend all arts of strength and toil.
Sure as is the call of spring,
Wake the roses, glistening
Rosy red and purely white,
As they gleamed on Towton fight.
Bear the storied plants away—
Slow and sure will they decay;
There and there alone they blow,
By brave blood, shed long ago,
In some mysterious fashion fed,
Towton Roses, white and red!

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

YORKSHIRE. PART I.

A CURIOUS mixture of old and new is the scene from the ramparts of the old city of York. A walled city of the ancient type, with battlements and towers, and antique gateways, under which rumble market-carts and waggons—no longer overhauled and peered into by suspicious warders, and prodded about with halbert and partisan. Over there green lawns and a silver-winding river, and the ruins of a famous abbey looming through the morning mists; but on this side a huge railway-station and a network of lines, that stretch away in all directions to every point of the compass, while far abroad on the wide plain can be heard the rattle and roar of converging trains. Within is the sleepy waking to life of a provincial town, a general pulling down of shutters, and sweeping of shop-fronts, while the minster bells tinkle musically, and, in a strong gleam of brightness, the minster itself shines forth in all its wondrous beauty. Between the present, with its small cares and worries, and the past in its grand perspective, there is only a swinging door, and in the solemn calm of the great nave, with the echo of prayer or psalm stealing among its grand columns, you may realise, for a moment, the gladness and the sorrow of the days that are no more.

But the memories of York go back to a time when the minster had no existence; when, perhaps, a temple stood on the site dedicated to Apollo; a time to which old York may look back with regret, when she flourished as an imperial city, with her sixth victorious legion filling her streets with military pomp and movement, with the emperor himself, perhaps, passing in his litter, amidst the acclamations of the soldiery.

But what a scene that must have been in York, when the sixth legion was recalled; that legion that had been settled there for near three hundred years! Such

a breaking up of homes, and severing of long continued ties of love and friendship, with the gloom of unknown danger, and forebodings of an endless separation, as the harsh trumpets sound, and the garrison files away in endless columns. There is left a Roman tower in the line of the city walls that must have seen all this, and more—things of which the merest shadow of tradition has come down to us. Thus Arthur kept his Christmas here with Gwenbwyfar, and the bards were everywhere singing his victories over the hated Saxon. Perhaps there was never a time since then when Christmas was not kept at York, which, so far as we know, was never wasted by the Angles. Other places they destroyed with fire and sword; but York, it is probable, maintained its municipal existence through all these troubles. And, perhaps, even when the capital of heathen Northumbria, the rites of the Christian faith may have been secretly observed. Anyhow we know that when, for a while, the land relapsed into paganism, and the missionaries from Canterbury had taken flight, James the Deacon continued in the Church of York, and rescued much prey from the enemy of mankind.

All this time York was of far more importance than London, larger in extent and no doubt more splendid. Its suburbs, it is said, extended to places a mile distant, and, with its remains of Roman magnificence, and the basilica of St. Peter in the midst, the quaint result of Roman art engrafted on barbaric minds, it must have presented a scene full of charm. Now, at the present time, there is nothing very charming about York, except the minster and the walls with their quaint old "bars." For the castle has been worked at by quarter sessions and county benches till they have left it little more interesting than Millbank Prison. At assize times, indeed, there is some stir of life about the place, and the flourish of trumpets that heralds the approach of judges and sheriffs, seems to waken some echoes of the past.

There was a time, in Edward the Second's reign, when York almost threatened to resume its ancient state. The Exchequer was removed to York with Domesday and other records, which loaded twenty-one carts, whose slow and dangerous progress along Watling Street from Westminster, might have come to a sudden end in a Scotch foray, with the result of a terrible gap in the record department of the future.

For it was after fatal Bannockburn, when the fairest parts of the kingdom were ravaged by the Scots. In Richard the Second's time, again, the King's Bench and Chancery were temporarily removed to York. But the city was not disposed to regret its former greatness so long as it kept its place as the one assize town for the whole county, the great centre and chief place of the Northern Circuit. Then to threaten to take a man to York, was to hold over his head all the penalties of the law, while "York Castle" was a terror to the evil-disposed and a warning to the idle apprentice all over Yorkshire. Then were York Assizes something to be remembered, with the crush of business in the courts, the talk about great causes and the rumours of the bar, while perspiring leaders pushed their way through the press, and heavy fees were flying about in all directions. There was feasting, too, at nights in the big hotels where all went so merrily, and plaintiffs and defendants drowned their cares in deep potations. But since 1864 all this has been changed; the cream of the assize business goes to Leeds.

When there is so little left of the old castle it will hardly do to say much about it; but there still remains a piece of antiquity among the corridors and tread-mills of the prison—Clifford's Tower, which dates from soon after the Conquest, when William the Conqueror tried to bridle the fierce Northumbrians. He found it easier to destroy them. The castle was garrisoned with Norman soldiers when the last great effort of the northern English, almost more Danish than English, was made to shake off the hated Norman yoke; for here more than elsewhere was the Norman held in detestation, perhaps because he was a nearer kinsman. Anyhow, the whole force of the North was in arms, all men leaving their homes and taking to the woods and fields, Malcolm the Scot taking part, with all the men from Forth to Tweed, and the Danes coming to help their kinsmen with two hundred and fifty ships sailing bravely up the Humber. The garrison set fire to the city, to clear the approaches to the castle, and the minster was burned to the ground, with many other buildings. But all the skill of the Normans in defending castles was useless against the press of fierce fighting men who came against them. The walls were scaled, and the Norman garrison destroyed to a man.

The tidings of this success sent a thrill through all England. Waltheof

hurried to York to lead his countrymen—Waltheof, the son of Siward, of the brave old earl who had marched to Dunsinane against Macbeth and placed the grateful Malcolm on his throne—the old earl who ordered that he should be laced in his armour to die, thinking it shame that a warrior should die in his bed. Shakespeare speaks of old Siward as uncle to Malcolm, but this is not quite clear. Anyhow, Malcolm was the husband of England's princess and brother-in-law of the rightful heir of the Confessor. But Malcolm had gone back to his own country, and the Danes, who fought chiefly for money, took a heavy bribe to leave the country; the Northumbrians, having had their fight, had mostly gone home; and Waltheof was left with enough men to garrison the city, to wait the tiger-like spring of the dread William. But York was nobly defended against William and his warlike engines. English and Norman met in the deadly breach, and the Norman recoiled before the stern courage of the defenders. But after six months' siege the English could fight no more for famine, and York surrendered on terms that William never intended to keep. And then for the first time the Norman Headsman established himself in York, and Waltheof was the first of his victims. The buildings of the city which fire had spared were razed to the ground. And then the whole country between York and Durham, a fertile plain even then, the seat of a large and thriving population, was wasted so that for nine years afterwards neither plough nor spade were put into the ground.

And yet York could not have been quite ruined, for in Domesday a respectable number of houses are returned; nor could the land have been quite naked, else surely the Jews would not have settled there in such numbers. These were Jews from Rouen, where they had for centuries formed a strong colony, and William, who found them useful in financial matters, encouraged them to settle in his new dominions. It was hardly to be expected that they should be popular among the English; but they flourished especially at York and amassed great wealth. The chief houses in the city were theirs, strong and gloomy stone buildings, where they were suspected to hide vast treasures, and the great chest in the minster was full of the bonds and the mortgages they held over the lands and goods of their neighbours.

At the coronation of Richard the Lion-

hearted, the Jews of York sent a deputation of two of their number, Benedict and Jocenus, with a pompous retinue and with rich gifts to propitiate the new monarch. But the roughs of London set upon the Jews, and Benedict was so much injured that he died soon after. Jocenus made his way back to York. But the unpunished outrage had given such confidence to the enemies of the Jews that they were no longer safe in their own houses. It was a time of crusades, of fanatic enthusiasm for the Cross, and here was a crusade ready to hand, a crusade that was preached with zeal by the lower orders of the clergy. The result was an outburst of popular fury. The house of Benedict's widow was plundered and burnt; the women ill-treated; the children flung into the flames. The rest of the Jews, with Jocenus at their head, took refuge in the castle—in the very keep, it is thought, of which we still have the remains. They were under the king's protection, and the governor did not venture to refuse them. But the Jews mistrusted him, and one day, when he had left his quarters in the keep, the Jews lowered the portcullis behind him and refused to re-admit him. At this the word was passed to raise the country against the Jews, and the people rose en masse and swarmed into York to join the citizens in a desperate attack upon the keep. The Jews fought like tigers, as their ancestors against Titus, but with as little avail, and seeing further resistance useless, an old rabbi urged the leaders among them to save their wives and daughters from dishonour and themselves from a lingering death by a general holocaust. Most of them agreed to this, and carried out the desperate work, Jocenus, the last survivor of them, offering his breast to the knife of the rabbi, who completed the sacrifice by his own self-inflicted death. Some, whose resolution had failed in this dread ordeal, opened the gates to the populace, who in their mad excitement butchered them all on the spot. This done, a general rush was made to the muniment chest in the cathedral, and bonds and mortgages were given to the flames.

As a financial measure, however, the slaughter of the Jews was a failure. The king's justiciar came down upon the rioters, and the fines he exacted made the people wish they had the Jews to deal with instead. But for anything

else this great crime and foul wrong went unavenged.

From very early times the castle was used also as a prison, but of its history in that capacity few records remain. Else one would like to know something of the Headsman of York, a functionary who no doubt existed, and was as important in his way as his kinsman of the Tower. It is said that the same family so long hereditary headsman in Normandy—the Jouennes—also had a branch who executed the justice of the king in England. But the real history of the executioner in England is almost a blank, and if any descendants of the family exist they make no sign in the way of family memoirs. The Jack Ketches of the last and present centuries are not to be confounded with the master of great works of the old régime, with his privileges and his rank, which was all but noble.

But Turpin, says some one, surely Turpin had something to do with York and its castle?

Exactly, but the feat of his celebrated ride was not, it seems, performed by him, but by one William Nevison, a really dashing highwayman of the same period. Connoisseurs in the matter are apt to condemn Dick as not quite up to his reputation in point of dash and daring, whereas Nevison, it is said, was a bold and generous fellow of the Robin Hood type, who would often give to the poor what he had taken from the rich. And Nevison was really acquitted of a robbery that he had actually committed in London one morning on the alibi of respectable witnesses who had seen him at York on the same evening. York Castle, however, was Turpin's last home, and he was executed at Tyburn, York, the place of execution, either called after its London prototype, or the name may be descriptive merely. Anyhow, Dick found his way into York Castle, and in rather a curious way. For some time previously he had lived near Beverley, where he was known and deemed respectable as Mr. Palmer, of Welton—his pockets being sufficiently well-lined to keep up the character for a time. His manners, alas! were not permanently reformed, for Mr. Palmer, after a while, began to trade in horses—a one-sided kind of trade, stealing the horses in Lincolnshire to sell them in Yorkshire. Horse-stealing, perhaps, was not then very severely regarded in the latter county, if not practised upon neighbours, and the

soi-disant Palmer might have ended his days in a respectable way; but being of a quarrelsome temper he fell out with a companion and threatened to shoot him, and so was sent to York Castle till he could find sureties to keep the peace. Nobody in the neighbourhood caring to vouch for him, Turpin wrote to his brother in Essex, begging him to find some men of straw to come and swear for him. The letter was duly forwarded through the post to the Essex Turpin, but with sixpence charged for postage, and the man not recognising his brother's handwriting, refused to take in the letter. Thus the letter was returned to the local post-office, where the old lady who acted as postmistress recognised the writing as Dick Turpin's, opened the letter, and communicated with the authorities. Dick was now lost, for accusers cropped up on all sides. One man, it is said, of the many witnesses who appeared, failed to recognise the prisoner as Turpin, and indeed offered to bet a guinea with the gaoler that this was not the renowned Dick. "Take him," whispered Turpin to the warder. "Take him, and I'll go halves with you." And Turpin kept up this coolness to the end, skipping up the fatal ladder as if the whole affair were a pleasantry.

While on the dismal subject of executions must be mentioned that of Mary Bateman, of Leeds, who was universally believed to be a witch, but was actually condemned for administering noxious drugs. An enormous crowd attended the execution at the new drop, in 1809, when certain refinements were effected in the hanging process. The rest must be told in the words of the local chronicler, who was, perhaps, not without a hidden belief in the power and wickedness of enchantments: "Many are said to have entertained an idea that even under the hands of the executioner she would, by her supernatural power, evade the punishment about to be inflicted. Upon such her exit must have had a very powerful effect. The hearse—with the poor wretch's remains—did not reach Leeds till near midnight, when, even at that late hour, crowds of people assembled, and each paid threepence for a sight of the body, by which thirty pounds accrued to the benefit of the General Infirmary."

But enough of the prison atmosphere and the gruesome tales of the scaffold, and once more upon the ramparts. Over to the east, almost in sight, lies Stamford Bridge, where the Norwegian king and

Tosti were overthrown and slain by Harold. The bridge is gone, that wooden bridge which a gigantic Norwegian defended for hours against a host, but the ground thereabouts is still known as battle flats, and it is said that the inhabitants of the village, at their annual feast—which, in the north country, is a kind of fair, held about the feast-day of the patron saint of the village church—always made pies in the form of a tub or boat to commemorate the event.

And then pursuing the round of the walls we come to Micklegate Bar, which, with its quaint Norman turrets and general aspect of vigorous antiquity, seems to bring us cheek by jowl with the stirring past. In that stirring past Micklegate Bar could generally boast a grisly array of human heads. Chief among these were those of Richard Scrope the archbishop, and Mowbray the Earl Marshal, son of Bolingbroke's old opponent in the lists of Coventry, when an ill-timed conspiracy brought them to the block. It was this outbreak that Sir John Falstaff marched to quell, taking Gloucestershire on his way—though Warwickshire was in Shakespeare's mind—and attesting his recruits before Mr. Justice Shallow. A bold and blythe archbishop too was Richard Scrope, witness the silver bowl still preserved at the minster, with its inscription giving forty days' pardon to him who drinks of it. The Wars of the Roses brought clusters of noble heads on Micklegate Bar. The duke's head first of all, struck off on Wakefield Green—

Off with his head and set it on York Gates,
So York may overlook the town of York;

then, as the Yorkist faction prevailed, the heads of the duke and his adherents were taken down for sepulture, while the freshly shredded heads of Lancastrian heroes occupied their place. It is difficult to account for the ferocity of the men of note of the day against each other, men of the same caste, bound by the ties of kindred and often of interest—the happy despatch of a race that had played out its part and was doomed to practical extinction—the tall trees felled and the undergrowth coming up with marvellous rapidity, especially as the country at large seems to have suffered little in the wars, and to have even increased rapidly in wealth and prosperity. For centuries after, however, Micklegate has its occasional show of heads, fewer and fewer, indeed, as the city's importance rapidly decreases. Richard Crookback was the last of the English kings who cared much

for, or made himself a home in, Yorkshire. And there his memory was long cherished as that of a king who meant well by his people. Perhaps the Tudors were never very popular in Yorkshire. Anyhow, there were rebellions and conspiracies enough, and one of the last of the noble heads affixed to Micklegate Bar was that of Percy, the earl who took the field for Mary Queen of Scots and the Catholic religion, the rising that is commemorated in Wordsworth's *White Doe of Rylstone*.

But that was a strange sight at Micklegate Bar, one midsummer night, or rather in the morning with dawn just showing in the sky, when the Cavaliers poured in with dented arms and lowered crests, in all the confusion and disorganisation of retreat from the lost battle of Marston Moor. Seven miles or so to the west of York is the village of Long Marston, and between this and the little hamlet of Tockwith, in a field of rye, were the Scots and the Roundheads drawn up, their front stretching for a mile and a half. It was three in the afternoon before the two armies were formed, and cannonading went on for two hours before either side engaged, while between the intervals of the cannon-shots could be heard the sonorous psalms of the Parliamentarians. Their field word was "God with us," and each man wore a white scarf or a white paper in his hat, as a distinguishing mark. The king's men wore neither scarf nor band, as had been agreed, and their word was "God and the king." The Scots were the first to move, and coming slowly down the hill into the plain in brigades of eight to twelve hundred men, advanced to within musket-shot. For some time an awful silence prevailed, a solemn pause, as a ditch and a high bank between the two lines put the attacking side under a disadvantage. At seven in the evening the Parliamentary generals gave the signal for battle, and the Scots crossed the ditch.

Everybody knows how Rupert in his fierce charge broke through the wing opposed to him—broke them so thoroughly that the Scotch general rode away from the field thinking the day was lost, and did not hear of the victory till next morning—while Cromwell, equally successful on the other wing, rallied horse and foot, and met Rupert's disordered squadrons, and drove them from the field. By ten o'clock the fight was lost and won, and the Royalists were in full retreat towards York.

The graves of the dead, at least four thousand in number, are still to be seen by Wilstrop Wood. As a result of the battle Rupert left York to its fate, and the city surrendered after a siege of eighteen weeks. And then the castle and fortifications were dismantled, all but Clifford's Tower, which was entrusted to the mayor of the city—to the lord mayor, that is, for York's mayor has borne that title since the days of Richard the Second, who gave the privilege of bearing the sword to his worship.

One last visit to the minster, with the setting sun showing through the great west window, while the choir is left in a soft silvery gloom. Perhaps it is a little disappointing to realise how few in this great temple are the memorials of the mighty dead. This grand building, that might serve for a national valhalla, is merely parochial in its monuments. There is a solitary prince, of whom nobody has heard—a certain William de Hatfield, son of Edward the Third, a name, nothing more—and the rest are archbishops. Respectable people, archbishops, no doubt, but not wildly interesting. Perhaps the tomb that excites the most interest is a canopied memorial to one of the primates, name forgotten, of which the verger whispers with extra official unction: "Yonder was where Martin hid himself the night he burnt the minster." That was in 1829. Martin was an eccentric genius. There were three brothers of them—John, the painter; William, who was a whimsical natural philosopher; and the incendiary, born in a little Northumberland village near Haltwhistle. Perhaps in the case of the latter there was some fanatic fervour working; the long-drawn aisle, the pealing organ, may have excited in him some antagonistic strain of feeling. Anyhow, he lay down with perfect coolness beside the stone effigy of a deceased archbishop, listened till everyone had departed, and the last echoing footstep had long died away, and then in the dim twilight collected all the service-books in the choir into a kind of sacrificial pile, struck a light, with flint, steel, and tinder, no doubt, and set the whole in a blaze; then he dexterously climbed out by a window he had before marked out—he had been a sailor, and was good at climbing—and tramped away into the darkness outside, while the flames he had kindled were bursting forth to the sky, and all the country round was wild with excite-

ment and dismay. Martin was caught and acquitted on the ground of insanity, and it is believed lived out a long and otherwise blameless life in custody. The choir was rebuilt at a cost of sixty-five thousand pounds.

Brave York, that is the hub of the county, the centre where ridings and rivers meet, if it has fallen something from its ancient high estate, has some compensation in being a capital railway centre. Like a spider in his den, you may reach with ease at any moment the farthest corner of the extended web, the rich and varied country. The great plain, known as the Vale of York, stretches from Doncaster to Durham, a rich and happy tract, with the great minster like a jewel in its centre, and studded with prosperous towns and charming villages. All round are the tributary counties of the hills, Cleveland or Cliffland, with its huge black cliffs frowning over the northern sea, with its forges and furnaces that hang a perpetual veil of smoke about Tees-mouth, and the Wold country with its breezy downs, with the shadows of the clouds on their bare brown sides; and the marsh country of Holderness, with its wide flats and high banks to keep at bay the tides that foam up Humber mouth.

And on the other side of the great valley, Richmondshire, a land of hill and dale, with Richmond's noble keep commanding both. And with that the wild region about Ingleborough, with limestone crags and wondrous caves—caves like that of Montesinos, with sinks and swallows where rivers tumble in and are lost. And thence to wild romantic Craven, with its grand line of inland cliffs, its health-giving moors, and charming Wharfedale, leading down to those busy haunts of men, the clothing districts. And then the busy moorland towns where the clouds seem to come down to touch the tall chimneys, and where all the mountain rills and the very rocks they tumble over are deeply dyed with indigo blue. And there is still Hallamshire left, with murky Sheffield, and the pleasant valley of the Don, the Meccah of the sporting Yorkshiremen—and which of them is not a sportsman, unless constrained by hard necessity into other grooves?

All these districts, which, where land is less plentiful, would be ranked as separate shires, are to be easily got at from York.

THE HANDKERCHIEF.

MR. PLANCHÉ inclined to believe that the modern handkerchief was identical with the "swat-cloth," worn on the left side in Saxon times, and carried in the hand in the middle ages.

The word "handkerchief" is not to be met with earlier than the sixteenth century, but it appears in its first shape in the wardrobe accounts of King Edward the Fourth, in which there is an entry of Alice Shapstone being paid twopence apiece for making forty-eight handcoverchiefs of Holland cloth. "Al maner of kerchiefs, hand kerchiefs, breast kerchiefs, and head kerchiefs" figure in the Earl of Northumberland's list of linen in 1512, and we find Lady Bryan complaining that her young charge, the Princess Elizabeth, had "no hankerchers," which was too bad, considering her father, the king, flaunted handkerchiefs of Holland, fringed with Venice gold and red and white silk, or bordered with silver and gold, or Flanders work; and expected those about him to be provided with napkins "to cleanse the nose from all foulness;" for in 1531, Mistress Armorer received five pounds eleven shillings and fourpence for "eleven dozen handkerchers and sheets for those of the Chamber, being at the king's finding."

In the Merry Monarch's day, those of the chamber would seem to have made their royal master find them in handkerchiefs whether he would or no, for Pepys records: "After dinner comes in Mr. Townsend. And there was I witness of a horrid rating which Mr. Ashburnham, as one of the grooms of the king's bed-chamber, did give him for want of linen for the king's person, which he swore was not to be endured, and that the king would not endure it, and that the king his father would have hanged his wardrobe men should he have been served so; the king having at this day no handkerchers, and but three bands to his neck. Mr. Townsend pleaded want of money, owing four thousand pounds to linendrapers, and exhausted his credit; but as soon as Ashburnham was out of hearing, Townsend averred that the grooms were to blame for the matter, by carrying away the king's linen at the quarter's end, as their perquisites, 'Let the king get more as he can.'"

Says Miles, the miller, in the play of *The Vowbreaker* (1606), when taking leave of his lady-love ere departing to the wars:

"Mistress Ursula, 'tis not unknown that I have loved you; if I die it shall be for your sake, and it shall be valiantly. I leave an handkercher with you; 'tis wrought with blue Coventry. Let me not at my return fail to sing my old song, 'She had a clout of mine sewed with blue Coventry,' and so hang myself at your infidelity." So Othello only did as lovers of Shakespeare's time did, in giving Desdemona a handkerchief as a token of love, and to test her truth; but the strawberry-spotted "napkin" she kissed and talked to, was worked by no ordinary needle-woman:

A sybil, that had numbered in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sewed the work;
The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk;
And it was dy'd in mummy, which the skilful
Conserved of maiden's hearts.

Women who would not have owned to a fifth of the sybil's years, and were only witches by right of sex, would have looked with contempt on the counterfeit strawberries that excited Cassio's admiration. In Heywood's *Fayre Mayde of the Exchange*, Phyllis orders her handkerchief to be embroidered thus:

In one corner of the same place wanton Love,
Drawing his bow, shooting an amorous dart;
Opposite against him, an arrow in a heart;
In a third corner, picture forth Disdain,
A cruel fate unto a loving vein;
In the fourth, draw a springing laurel-tree,
Circled about with a ring of poesy.

Elizabethan embroideresses were evidently mistresses of their craft, and could perhaps, if they had been put to it, have produced as marvellous a piece of handiwork as the pocket-handkerchief for which the late Czarina paid five hundred pounds, the working of it having occupied the embroideress seven years, and cost her her eyesight in the bargain.

When good Queen Bess ruled the land, it was, Stow tells us, the custom for maids and gentlewomen to give their favourites, as tokens of their love, little handkerchiefs of about three or four inches square, wrought round about, and with a button or a tassel at each corner, and a little one in the middle with silk and thread, the best edged with a small gold lace or twist; which, being folded up in four cross folds so as the middle might be seen, gentlemen and others did usually wear them in their hats, as favours of their loves and mistresses. Some cost sixpence apiece, some twelpence, and the richest sixteenpence. In later times, the lady's own

handkerchief was the much desired prize of an ardent swain.

I envy not the joy the pilgrim feels,
After long travel to some distant shore,
When at the relic of his saint he kneels,
For Delia's pocket-hankerchief is mine.

Steele vowed his Prue was too great a bounty to be received at once, he must be prepared by degrees, lest the mighty gift should distract him with joy, and to that end told her: "You must give me either a fan, a mask, or a glove you have worn, or I cannot live; otherwise you must expect I'll kiss your hand, or, when I next sit by you, steal your handkerchief." Into what raptures a youth, mad with the delightful delirium of a grand passion, may go over a handkerchief, Lord Beaconsfield tells us: "Is it not all a dream? He takes from his bosom the handkerchief of Henrietta Temple. He recognises upon it her magical initials, worked in her own dark hair. A smile of triumph certainly irradiates his countenance, as he rapidly presses the memorial to his lips, and imprints upon it a thousand kisses; and holding the cherished testimony of his felicity to his heart, sleep at length descended upon the exhausted frame of Ferdinand Armin."

Evelyn held

Of pocket-mouchoirs, nose to drain,
A dozen laced, a dozen plain,

enough for a lady's necessities. We should think so, too, if they must cost so much as is set down in a list of articles necessary to a fine lady's wardrobe in 1719, in which a cambric handkerchief is priced at ten shillings, and a Flanders lace one at as many pounds. George the Second expected his daughters to be satisfied with two dozen cambric handkerchiefs every other year; a modern novelist gives one of his heroines twelve dozen as part of her wedding outfit. A few years ago, the two descriptions of handkerchief, the plain for morning, the laces for evening wear, were deemed sufficient variety; but a French authority on such matters assures us a woman of fashion ought to be provided with handkerchiefs for morning toilette, for walking, for church-going, for the theatre, for the opera, for court, for visits of charity, and for boudoir use; to say nothing of the handkerchief to be lost, the handkerchief to be given away, and the handkerchief to be allowed to be stolen.

Curiously enough, Frenchwomen used to be supposed to be innocent of the existence of such an article, its very name being

tabooed in polite conversation, while it was beyond the daring of an actor or actress to exhibit a handkerchief on the stage, however tearful the dramatic situation might be. Mdlle. Duchenois was brave enough to break the rule by carrying a handkerchief in her hand, but when the exigencies of the scene compelled an allusion to the obnoxious piece of cambric, she spoke of it as a light tissue; and years afterwards, cries of indignation saluted the utterance of the awful word in one of De Vigny's adaptations of Shakespeare. All this nonsense came to an end with the Empress Josephine. She was unfortunate enough to have bad teeth, and, to hide them, adopted the custom of carrying a small square handkerchief, bordered with costly lace, which she was for ever raising to her lips. Of course the ladies of the court imitated their mistress's example, and the handkerchief was elevated to the important position it has ever since maintained in the feminine toilette.

Some four seasons back a fair promenader in "the park" astonished beholders with a dress made of thirty-nine blue and white silk handkerchiefs, and hat and parasol to match; somebody said she was a symphony in spots, but the novel notion took with the sex, and handkerchief dresses became the vogue; even now we learn from a lady-writer on the fashions that handkerchiefs are needed for conversion into caps and cuffs, dress-pockets, and tiny muffs for bridesmaids' bouquets.

Last year, Parisian dames, discarding names and initials, decked the corners of their mouchoirs with embroidered flowers and mottoes. One beauty displayed a rose, with the device, "I am all heart;" another, an ivy leaf with, "I cling or die;" and another, a lily with the words, "Purity and nobility." Fair ones pretending to a modest appreciation of their personal charms flaunted a poppy, with the inscription, "Beauty dwells in the heart, not in the face;" a spray of mignonette announced, "My qualities surpass my beauty;" and one lady, dissatisfied with others rather than herself, wore a handkerchief having a primrose surmounting the legend, "I am misunderstood."

American girls are said to have long since perfected a code of handkerchief signals. If a lady winds her handkerchief around her first finger, it is an indication that she has found her fate; if around the third finger, that admiration is, or should be, yet more hopeless. If she drops the

article, it is equivalent to announcing her willingness to establish friendly relations. Drawing it across the lips signifies, "I wish to know you;" across the cheek, "I love you;" across the forehead, "We are watched;" across the eyes, "I am sorry;" and letting it rest upon them, "You are cruel!" Twirling the handkerchief in both hands betokens indifference; in the left hand, that the twirler desires to be left alone; in the right hand, that her affections are disposed of elsewhere. A handkerchief thrown over the shoulder means "Follow me;" one held by opposite corners says, "Wait for me." "No," is conveyed by resting the handkerchief against the left cheek; "Yes," by the like action as regards the right cheek. Pocketing it is a silent good-bye, and with that we bid good-bye to our subject.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III.

CHAPTER I. MRS. CALLENDER ENTERTAINS.

THE date was three months later than that of the last episode in our story; the hour, five of the afternoon; the place, Amos Callender's neat abode in Becklington market-place.

Spring was in its fairest, freshest days; those days when garlands of faint and tender hue seem flung from branch to branch and tree to tree with careless hand; and all the world was immature, but unspeakably lovely in its immaturity.

Mrs. Callender's jonquils, standing all a-row in the window, determined not to be behind the rest of the world, had dressed themselves in pale green smocks, with nodding hoods of white and gold, while their sweet breath made all the low-raftered parlour fragrant.

Mrs. Callender's tea-table, too, presented a springlike festivity of aspect. Salad, green and fresh (not omitting the young and delicate onion); shrimps, rosy-hued, transparent of shell, emulating in size their cousins, the prawns; and a cold round of beef that would have made the table groan if the article of furniture in question had not happened to be a sort of magnified oak settle that hadn't a groan in it.

The tea-table being thus dressed en fête, it was only to be expected that Mrs. Callender should follow suit; and this, indeed, she had done, having so much in

common with the jonquils that yellow ribbons fluttered in her cap.

The worthy tanner, too, presented a shiny and scarified appearance that, with him, meant sundry severe toilette processes.

He was pacing restlessly up and down the pleasant parlour; now and then catching up a shrimp by the tail and deftly swinging it into his mouth.

He was also looking at Bess. No unpleasant object of contemplation either, for time has dealt gently with that good and faithful wife, whom we first encountered in the character of a brave true comforter to her husband in great calamity. Her hair is grey, and she is more buxom as to figure than of yore; but of other change there is none.

Bess is still the same bright hopeful woman as ever; she might be own sister to Farmer Dale's Nancy for the matter of that.

"Don't go to eat the s'rimps wi'out shellin' 'em to-night, Amos," she said, looking up from her knitting in a somewhat cajoling fashion. "Mrs. Dale's apt to be a bit pertickler, and it ain't counted genteel to eat s'rimps whole, that way."

"Well," said Amos, glad of a grievance or the semblance of one to pass the time away, "'tain't reasonable, danged if it is, to fiddle-faddle with one's victuals like that. I ask you now, lass, when you've took off a shrimp's head and his tail, —where is he?"

Bessie was obliged to allow that his pink stripped body made but a poor show.

"Just so; a man like me don't know he's there, and is ready to think he's more trouble than he's worth. I'd be same as the big elephant I see'd at t' Zoological Gardens last time I were up i' Lunnun—time as I missed t' ghost, thee knows, lass. Well, the great beast opened his mouth wide as ever it could go, and the folks pitched nuts in. It stands to sense he couldn't tell if they wur theer or no, but he giv' a kind of a swaller, and smirked a bit (being pleased to be took so much notice on), though I reckon he didn't get much satisfaction out of the business, for all he made such a show."

Bessie had dropped her knitting on her lap, and was looking, with wide appreciative eyes, at her lord and master.

"Ay, but, Amos," she said, with a sigh of admiration, "yo've seen a deal o' life!"

"Well, well," replied the travelled one, "I reckon I've gone about wi' my eyes

open; that's the difference between me and some folks."

Further conversation was put a stop to by the arrival of the long expected guests—Farmer Dale and Mrs. Dale—the latter with her best cap tied up in a spotted handkerchief for safety; Jeremy Bind-whistle, with a wonderful "bouquet" in his Sunday coat, and bearing an excuse from "the missus," who was "a bit out o' sorts;" and Softie, also in a state of forlorn temporary bachelorhood, his better half having "a crook in her temper," as the farmer slyly suggested to Bessie, though poor Softie called it a "cold in the head."

"Well, here we are," said Amos, rubbing his hands, and much relieved by the arrival of his guests. He was a man of impatient nature, as may have already been gathered, and hated waiting; but he was quite content now, as he took his seat at the bottom of the table, and looked radiantly round his own hospitable board.

Stay though, one guest was lacking.

"Why, wherever's Jake got to?" he cried, a blank look spreading over his jolly face, like a cloud over the sun; "the lazy laggard!"

"He's mostly spry enough, is Jake," said Jeremy, giving a delicate touch to his posy.

"So he is," assented the host; "but we conna wait for 'un—count of there bein' marrow-bones."

"The soul of a marrow-bone is not havin' his insoide boiled away, and bein' served up pipin' hot," said Jeremy, with the air of a connoisseur.

So the marrow-bones were had in, the tea poured out, and, as Amos presently observed, "things were set a-goin'."

Softie had plastered his hair down with a liberal allowance of water until it looked like a badly made wig, and put on a green tie, which gave him a more than usually cadaverous appearance; but he seemed to be enjoying himself, in a silent sort of way of his own—a kind of crushed and mortified rejoicing, that was his highest manifestation of content.

He even volunteered a remark without anybody leading up to it.

"Happen Jake's lingered a bit at The Safe Retreat. They do say as he's spakin' up to Widow Green."

Green, the proprietor of the inn in question, had departed this life a year back, and his buxom relic was the cynosure of many eyes. She, or her cosy well-to-do inn—or both—as the case might be.

"She'd never tak' oop wi' such a little chap as Jake!" said Mrs. Dale, with a glance of pride at her own husband's ample proportions.

"She moight do wur," put in Jeremy; "Jake's as good a hearted chap as stands i' Becklington, and it 'ud be a foine settlement i' loife for him, mind you, in the evening of his days."

"Happen his legs moight stand i' his way," said Softie suggestively.

"May be," replied the farmer; "but a woman o' sense would overlook such trifles if so be as a man had a good head-piece on his shoulders and could manage the customers—more especially of a Saturday night when they're apt to be boistersome."

"Aye, aye, they're a handful for a lone woman and no mistake," quoth Nance, shaking her head and looking mighty grave, as she tried to picture herself struggling with the farm, and no master to look to things.

What more might have been said on the interesting topic of Jake's amorous aspirations will never be known, for at that moment the individual in question was seen crossing the market-place, and that with such a strange look of ineffable dignity and importance about him as made his spindle-shanks appear equal to the very stoutest supporters ever relied upon by man.

"Whatever's ado?" said Bess, keeping the teapot in mid air in her amaze.

"Hold thy peace, lass," said her husband. "Jake likes to tell his tale his own way."

"Sure as sure he's goin' to tell us as the widdy's to take him, legs and all, for better for wuss!" ejaculated the farmer in a husky snort that was meant for a whisper.

If so spare a man as Jake could be said to swell with importance, then was Jake swelled, even as the ambitious frog of old.

Was he not the best pioneer of news in Becklington? Did he not love to hold his audience on tenter-hooks? Was he going to let them off now? Not he!

If he'd been going to set the hymn tune at a chapel meeting he couldn't have looked solemn, or bade Mrs. Callender good-evening in a more sepulchral manner.

"If it's marriage, he takes it wuss than a funeral," thought Nance, tossing her handsome head in scorn.

"Yo're late, Jake," said Amos, tipping a wink to the company in general to show that he was humouring the old gossip.

"Aye," said Jake, speaking very low down in himself, leaning back in his chair, and staring abstractedly at the shrimps—

not as shrimps, but because they chanced to come in his line of vision; "aye, I am—wi' cause too."

Bess had set the teapot down with a jerk, and was staring hard at Jake. Indeed, everyone was staring at Jake. Most of the company had their mouths open as well as their eyes.

"I've coom down from t' vicarage, that's what kep' me," said the oracle at last, mystical in his utterances as an oracle should be.

"Now don't," said Bess, ready to whimper, "go for to tell me as anything's gone wrong with the vicar's lady, Jake, for I couldn't abear it—nor yet wi' the vicar! We've had death and sorrow enoo among us of late, Lord knows!"

"Taint sorrow," said Jake, taking his eyes from the shrimps, and fixing Softie instead; "its confugion—its runnins to and fro—its tears o' joy a-streamin' down that dear lady's face—and the vicar stammerin' and starin' loike ony fule—that's what it is."

"Tell yer tale yer own way, lad," said the farmer, scratching the nape of his neck in a sort of paroxysm of restrained impatience; "thou'll go thy ain gate, let who may gi' thee a hitch behoinde. Tak' thee time wi't—tak' thee time wi't, lad!"

The present was a moment of supreme happiness to little Jake. Was not every soul present hanging on his words? Was he not the centre of general attraction—the one spot upon which every eye was fixed? And besides, had he not a secret store of delight in that he knew what a very big cat he was hoarding in his bag, and with what a bounce it would leap into the middle of the crowd, when the supreme moment should arrive?

Jake licked his lips, as one who tastes a morsel rich and rare, before he spoke again.

"What would you say to Maister Ralph bein' aloive and well, and comin' whoam for to enjoy his own again?"

The effect was even beyond his expectations. It was simply stupendous.

Such a scraping of chair-legs against the floor, as seats were pushed back! Such long-drawn sighs and gasps of astonishment!

Jake looked calmly from one to the other. He wished to taste his own triumph in all its sweetness.

The farmer was the first to recover himself.

"What would oi say?" he cried, bringing his fist down on the table till all the dishes rang again. "I'd say as t' news wur t' best as ever I heerd. I'd say as t' day as

brings the lad safe whoam 'ull need no sun for to mak' it broight! I'd say as t' look o' his bonnie face would be t' best o' all the sights under heaven. Bless us all! Why Nancy—what's amiss?"

Farmer Dale, who sat next his wife, now began to pat her on the back, as if he thought she were choking; for the tears were welling up in her bright eyes, and she was so upset that she began to wipe them away with her new cap-strings.

"Here's a soft-hearted one for you!" cried the farmer (speaking rather gulpingly himself though), at which rallying Amos put in a word for the womenkind.

"Leave the missuses alone," said he; "my lass is as bad as yourn."

And true enough, Bess was ready to choke in her tea.

"It's not the lad I'm fit to cry over," said Nancy, catching her breath; "it's the thought of the poor father as comes over me—him as died hungry for a word and a look of the boy he loved so dear—him as conna be here to see the boy come whoam. My sakes, farmer! but done yo' mind last time t' squire came up to t' farm, how he tould us about the Christmas they wur goin' to keep, wi' Maister Ralph back, and never a hungry soul to be in Becklington that day? Done yo' mind how he praised my syllabub, and crushed the big heads o' lavender in his hand as he walked by my side, and said how sweet they smelled, and how was it no one grew such lavender as me? Do yo' mind the gentle way of him, and the lovin' look of him when he spoke of the boy as must come to a cold hearth, as the sayin' goes, and an empty cheer?"

"But is it true, Jake—is it true?" cried Bess, leaning forward so eagerly she upset one of her own best china teacups. "It seems too like a story-book, or a fairy-tale, or summut o' that mak' o' fables."

"It's true as Gospel is," replied Jake, "and I conna say no stronger words than them. Maister Ralph he wur i' an open boat two nights and two days, and two por sailors along wi' him. Second night one por chap, he died, and they pitched him overboard. Then they drifted—their fingers bein' that numb wi' cold they couldn't have handled an oar if there'd bin one—which there weren't. Well, they giv' themselves up for lost—Maister Ralph and that other. It wur that dark they couldn't hardly see each other's faces: a' they could hear was the roarin' of the waves around them. Maister Ralph was gettin' dazed like, and sat there a' in a heap, as yo' may say,

thinkin' of the poor gentleman as used to larn him a' his larnin', and wur drowned fust go off when t' big ship took to sinkin'; when—all at once—there come a lurch, and a bounce, and a bump, and—why theer they wur!"

"Wheres theer?" put in Softie, who had been one broad stare of amaze all through.

"Why, where should it be, num' yed?" said Jake, with infinite and concentrated contempt; "on the desert island, of course—where else?"

"Same as Robinson Crusoe," suggested Jeremy Bindwhistle, who was a man of reading and research.

"It was a por kind of a place, that island," continued Jake, taking no notice of this interpolation; "nothin' much more than a stoopid old rock, with a few pigeons and jelly-fish, and such like stuck about it here and there, and nothin' better than a kind of a cave for shelter; but they made shift to keep body and soul together, and kep' a bit of a flag flyin' all day long in hopes a ship moight pass that way and see 'em—which it did; but not till many a weary day and night had passed away, and them two misfortunate critturs weren't far off bein' skelingtons. I reckon you moight ha' pretty nigh seen through 'em if yo'd set 'em up on end betwixt yo and t' loight," added Jake, determined to lose nothing in the way of detail.

"And when the ship come, and the sailors saw the little flag, where did they take Maister Ralph and that other?" asked Mrs. Dale, whose eyes were still tearful, and whose motherly heart was swelling.

"To a far-off place," said Jake, "a place called Rio, as I'm told—which isn't much of a name, but maybe more of a place. Anyhow, it's where our vicar's off to, pretty quick too, I can tell yo'."

"Our vicar, did yo' say?" said Jeremy, more and more astonished if that were possible; "is he goin' to fetch Maister Ralph home?"

"Aye, that is he," replied Jake; "for the lad is sorely sick——"

"Yo' said, 'aloive and well,'" objected Amos.

"That was a figger," said Jake, "a parable, as it were; meanin' as him as were dead were now giv' back to us once more."

"And did Maister Ralph write to the vicar then?" said Bess, determined to know the ins and the outs of the whole matter.

"That did he. He knew as t' squire and—God help the boy!—the mother too would ha' bin told how the Aladdin lay

many a fathom deep, wi' her back broke 'an' all han's lost,' and he thought as the vicar could best break to those poor hearts as their boy was safe and sound—to use a figger again, mates—for joy's oft-times as hard to meet face to face as sorrow, and that Maister Ralph well knew. So you see it's this way; there's none left to break it to, and all the house shut up an' silent. I don't mean to say as there isn't Mrs. Prettyman—or as she won't take on awful, and have the highstrikes wuss than common—I said so to Maister Deane as he were settin' off wi' the boy's letter in his pocket to your place, Jeremy; and 'I'll go too,' says Mistress Deane, a clutchin' of the vicar's arm. 'Nurse Prettyman will be glad to hug someone,' says she, a-smilin' and a-cryin' both in one; 'an' she can't hug you, Cuthbert,' says she."

"It's like the sweet ways on her, danged if it ain't!" said the farmer; "there ain't her ekal anywheres, say I!"

"Amen to that," cried Jake, "and here's wishin' there was more like her."

Then his reflections took a new turn.

"Whatever 'ull the boy Davey say to the turn things has took?"

"Yo' may say that," said Jeremy, "and him so far away too, wi' no one to unbuzzum himsel' to! It were reet enoo' for t' lad to go to see after all the sugar-canes and such-like that grow like so much corn, as I hear, out in Demerara, and mak' a fine harvest if reetly fettled, but it's hard on him to be away when such junketings are goin' on, put it how you will. Then there's Mrs. Devenant—what will she say to the turn matters has took? Yo' may say she's been pretty nigh off her head ever sin' t' squire died so suddint like, and her beside him. I've never felt as I reetly got to t' bottom o' that business; happen I never shall; but I've a mind to think as she fell a-dozin', and t' squire were left to do his deain' all alone; anyway she and Davey had a bad fallin' out of it—ay, that had they—and there were more fallins out beside, for I met the girl Hilda, wi' her eyes as red as a ferret's, comin' out of the meadows. Davey wur walkin' beside her, and speakin' fast-like; his face wur nigh as white as t' squire's when he lay confined, and he wur twistin' his hands together, loike as if he wur tryin' to strangle his own heart. He never went anigh t' White House afore he sailed for that far-off place, and it just fair gloppens me, take it at what end yo' will."

"What does Mrs. Prettyman say about

it?" asked Mrs. Dale, who was a shrewd as well as a kindly woman.

"She says nowt—know what she may—but she carries a load on her mind, or her face belies her. I reckon she conna forgive hersel' for that there quinsy that kep' her from her master's bedside the night hedied."

"But Davey was with him at the last?" said Bess, awestruck at the tone the conversation had taken.

"Yes; he helt him i' his arms as the last breath lef' his body. But he was nigh gone when Davey reached him. Davey wur mad-like all the next day, and Mrs. Devenant wur like a stone image and nothin' less when she went away home wi' the girl Hilda."

"Lord bless us all! What days we live in!" said Softie at this juncture.

"That do we," said Jeremy, pleased with his late efforts in oratory, and glad to hear the sound of his own voice again; "the things as has happened i' this here town the last few weeks is enough to make a man feel as tho' he wur in a merry-go-round, and forced to howd on hard to keep his yed. It's here to-day and gone to-morrow."

"Nay," said Jake, "it's gone to-day and here to-morrow wi' Maister Ralph, and my heart's that light within me, I'm fit to break out i' praise."

"Doant 'ee, Jake, doant 'ee!" put in Softie, in a wheedling manner all his own; "tak' some thought for Mistress Callender's rafters—do 'ee now!"

"Ay, ay," said Amos, with a loud ringing laugh; "they've bin a bit shaky this while back. Have a care, neighbour, have a care."

"Fall to on t' victuals instead," said the good-natured farmer; "thee'st brought a bellyful o' news along wi' thee to stay thy stommick, lad, but t' news is a' out now, and 's toime t' victuals wur in."

Jake, profiting by this wise counsel, pulled his chair up to the table, and began his meal; but he only got on slowly, so hard did the women pelt him with questions.

"So the vicar's going across the seas to fetch Maister Ralph home?" said Jeremy meditatively, later on in the evening; "I'm glad the 'asters promise so well this year."

"I'm glad my crops look so well," rejoined the farmer. "T' young squoire's sure and sartain to come and see me and Nance there, afore he's bin a week in Becklington."

"Ay, he's his father's own son," said they all.

So each built his or her castle; each made up his or her mind what to say in greeting to the wanderer on his return—what to say to the bright boy who had been mourned as dead, and was alive again. And each and all came to these tender resolves for nothing after all.

For, after many long weeks of absence, the vicar came back to Becklington—alone.

He looked old and worn, as well he might, for his task had been a hard one.

Even to the dear wife he loved so well, Cuthbert Deane spoke but little of his first interview with Ralph Stirling.

"I shall never forget the boy's face when I told him his father was dead—never while I live."

That was what the vicar said to his wife; and Alicia asked no questions.

She saw that the brave true heart had been stirred to its deepest depths.

Ralph had refused to return to his desolate home.

"I could not bear it," he had said, turning away a white and stricken face from Cuthbert Deane's gaze; "not yet—not yet."

The land whither the stranger-vessel had borne the castaways was rich and beautiful, and there Ralph elected to stay.

By Squire Geoffrey's will, Cuthbert Deane was Ralph's guardian and trustee.

"My worldly possessions cannot be in better hands," said the boy with a smile. "You can send me what money I want, and you and old Anthony can manage the rest."

"Is Ralph much changed?" said Alicia to her husband, some time after his return from Rio.

"All he has gone through has naturally made some change," said the vicar. "He looks older—older than his years—and has grown in every way marvellously like his father."

Time passed on.

Davey was busy winding up and trying to dispose of the estate in Demerara. Jeremy was bringing the gardens and shrubberies at Dale End to an exalted state of perfection. Nurse Prettyman was wearying to see her nursling. Old Anthony seemed to have taken a fresh lease of life since he had heard of Master Ralph's safety, and surely never did more faithful steward toil for an absent lord.

Mrs. Devenant was in bad health—so folks said. At all events, she was seldom seen abroad, and had never been at church since the squire died. Hilda was her constant attendant shadow. The girl's face was sweet as ever, but a great deal sadder; and some coldness or constraint seemed to have arisen between her and her friend the vicar's wife.

Cuthbert Deane visited the White House; tried to win Hilda from her reserve; her mother from her moody, silent-ways. But even he, for once, failed. He had to give it up. And gradually it came to be said in Becklington that Hester Devenant was not quite in her right mind—and that Hilda, with a daughter's devotion and a mother's tenderness, watched over and tended her, keeping all others at arm's-length.

Two things were certain.

Davey never wrote to the woman who had once been his friend, and Hilda never spoke of Davey.

The next "event" in Becklington was the death of poor Softie, just when the leaves began to fall.

When the branches were once more thick with bursting buds, Softie's widow took to herself a second spouse.

"Bein' as she was used to scolding summat, she felt lonesome till she took another mon to keep her hand in," said Jake, explaining the matter to some new comers at The Safe Retreat; "but t' new felly wur a different sort to Softie. He beat Softie's missus i' the first week o' their wedded bliss—aye, did he!—and tould her he'd do it agen if she didn't keep a civil tongue i' her yed."

This delicious item of intelligence kept tongues wagging for a time: but the interest died at last. Then came a long dull epoch during which nobody did anything particular, and the weather and the crops formed the chief subjects of conversation with Jake and his fellows.

But in the early months of the third spring from that spring-day with which this chapter opened, Becklington was roused to wild excitement by the news that young Squire Ralph was coming home again.

And Jake was the first to know it and to tell it!

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XLIX. CAPTAIN VIGNOLLES GETS HIS MONEY.

WHEN we last left Captain Scarborough, he had just lost an additional sum of two hundred and twenty-seven pounds to Captain Vignolles, which he was not able to pay, besides the sum of fifty pounds which he had received the day before, as the first instalment of his new allowance. This was but a bad beginning of the new life he was expected to lead under the renewed fortunes which his father was preparing for him. He had given his promissory note for the money at a week's date, and had been extremely angry with Captain Vignolles because that gentleman had, under the circumstances, been a little anxious about it. It certainly was not singular that he should have been so, as Captain Scarborough had been turned out of more than one club in consequence of his inability to pay his card debts. As he went home to his lodgings, with Captain Vignolles's champagne in his head, he felt very much as he had done that night when he attacked Harry Annesley. But he met no one whom he could consider as an enemy, and therefore got himself to bed, and slept off the fumes of the drink.

On that day he was to return to Tretton; but, when he woke, he felt that before he did so he must endeavour to make some arrangements for paying the amount due at the end of the week. He had already borrowed twenty pounds from Mr. Grey, and had intended to repay him out of the sum which his father had given him. But that sum now was gone, and he was again nearly penniless. In this emergency there

was nothing left to him, but again to go to Mr. Grey.

As he was shown up the stairs to the lawyer's room, he did feel thoroughly ashamed of himself. Mr. Grey knew all the circumstances of his career, and it would be necessary now to tell him of this last adventure. He did tell himself, as he dragged himself up the stairs, that for such a one as he was there could be no redemption. "It would be better that I should go back," he said, "and throw myself from the Monument." But yet he felt that if Florence Mountjoy could still be his, there might yet be a hope that things would go well with him.

Mr. Grey began by expressing surprise at seeing Captain Scarborough in town. "Oh yes, I have come up. It does not matter why, because, as usual, I have put my foot in it. It was at my father's bidding; but that does not matter."

"How have you put your foot in it?" said the attorney. There was one way in which the captain was always "putting" both his "feet in it;" but, since he had been turned out of his clubs, Mr. Grey did not think that that way was open to him.

"The old story."

"Do you mean that you have been gambling again?"

"Yes;—I met a friend last night, and he asked me to his rooms."

"And he had the cards ready?"

"Of course he had. What else would any one have ready for me?"

"And he won that remnant of the twenty pounds which you borrowed from me, and therefore you want another." Hereupon the captain shook his head. "What is it then that you do want?"

"Such a man as I met," said the captain, "would not be content with the remnant of twenty pounds. I had received

fifty from my father, and had intended to call here and pay you."

"That has all gone too?"

"Yes; indeed. And in addition to that I have given him a note for two hundred and twenty-seven pounds, which I must take up in a week's time. Otherwise I must disappear again;—and this time for ever."

"It is a bottomless gulf," said the attorney. Captain Scarborough sat silent, with something almost approaching to a smile on his mouth; but his heart within him certainly was not smiling. "A bottomless gulf," repeated the attorney. Upon this the captain frowned. "What is it that you wish me to do for you? I have no money of your father's in my hands, nor could I give it you if I had it."

"I suppose not. I must go back to him, and tell him that it is so." Then it was the lawyer's turn to be silent; and he remained thinking of it all, till Captain Scarborough rose from his seat, and prepared to go. "I won't trouble you any more, Mr. Grey," he said.

"Sit down," said Mr. Grey. But the captain still remained standing. "Sit down. Of course I can take out my cheque-book, and write a cheque for this sum of money. Nothing would be so easy, and if I could succeed in explaining it to your father during his lifetime, he, no doubt, would repay me. And, for the sake of auld lang syne, I should not be unhappy about my money, whether he did so or not. But would it be wise? On your own account would it be wise?"

"I cannot say that anything done for me would be wise;—unless you could cut my throat."

"And yet there is no one whose future life might be easier. Your father, the circumstances of whose life are the most singular I ever knew——"

"I shall never believe all this about my mother, you know."

"Never mind that now. We will pass that by for the present. He has disinherited you."

"That will be a question some day for the lawyers,—should I live."

"But circumstances have so gone with him that he is enabled to leave you another fortune. He is very angry with your brother, in which anger I sympathise. He will strip Tretton as bare as the palm of my hand for your sake. You have always been his favourite, and so, in spite of all things, you are still. They tell me he cannot last for six months longer."

"Heaven knows I do not wish him to die."

"But he thinks that your brother does. He feels that Augustus begrudges him a few months' longer life, and he is angry. If he could again make you his heir, now that the debts are all paid, he would do so." Here the captain shook his head. "But as it is, he will leave you enough for all the needs of even luxurious life. Here is his will, which I am going to send down to him for final execution this very day. My senior clerk will take it, and you will meet him there. That will give you ample for life. But what is the use of it all, if you can lose it in one night or in one month among a pack of scoundrels?"

"If they be scoundrels, I am one of them."

"You lose your money. You are their dupe. To the best of my belief you have never won. The dupes lose, and the scoundrels win. It must be so."

"You know nothing about it, Mr. Grey."

"This man who had your money last;—does he not live on it as a profession? Why should he win always, and you lose?"

"It is my luck."

"Luck! There is no such thing as luck. Toss up, right hand against left for an hour together, and the result will be the same. If not for an hour, then do it for six hours. Take the average, and your cards will be the same as another man's."

"Another man has his skill," said Mountjoy.

"And uses it against the unskilful to earn his daily bread. That is the same as cheating. But what is the use of all this? You must have thought of it all before."

"Yes; indeed."

"And thinking of it you are determined to persevere. You are impetuous, not thoughtless, with your brain clouded with drink, and for the mere excitement of the thing you are determined to risk all in a contest for which there is no chance for you; and by which you acknowledge you will be driven to self-destruction, as the only natural end."

"I fear it is so," said the captain.

"How much shall I draw it for?" said the attorney, taking out his cheque-book. "And to whom shall I make it payable? I suppose I may date it to-day, so that the swindler who gets it may think that there is plenty more behind for him to get."

"Do you mean that you are going to lend it me?"

"Oh yes."

"And how do you mean to get it again?"

"I must wait, I suppose, till you have won it back among your friends. If you will tell me that you do not intend to look for it in that fashion, then I shall have no doubt as to your making me a legitimate payment in a very short time. Two hundred and twenty pounds won't ruin you, unless you are determined to ruin yourself." Mr. Grey the meanwhile went on writing the cheque. "Here is provided for you a large sum of money," and he laid his hand upon the will, "out of which you will be able to pay me without the slightest difficulty. It is for you to say whether you will or not."

"I will."

"You need not say it in that fashion. That's easy. You must say it at some moment when the itch of play is on you; when there shall be no one by to hear; when the resolution, if held, shall have some meaning in it. Then say,—there is that money which I had from old Grey. I am bound to pay it. But if I go in there I know what will be the result. The very coin that should go into his coffers will become a part of the prey on which those harpies will feed. There's the cheque for the two hundred and twenty-seven pounds. I have drawn it exact, so that you may send the identical bit of paper to your friend. He will suppose that I am some money-lender who has engaged to supply your needs while your recovered fortune lasts. Tell your father he shall have the will to-morrow. I don't suppose I can send Smith with it to-day."

Then it became necessary that Scarborough should go; but it would be becoming that he should first utter some words of thanks. "I think you will get it back, Mr. Grey."

"I dare say."

"I think you will. It may be that the having to pay you will keep me for a while from the gambling-table."

"You don't look for more than that?"

"I am an unfortunate man, Mr. Grey. There is one thing that would cure me, but that one thing is beyond my reach."

"Some woman?"

"Well;—it is a woman. I think I could keep my money for the sake of her comfort. But never mind. Good-bye, Mr. Grey. I think I shall remember what you have done for me." Then he went and sent the identical cheque to Captain

Vignolles, with the shortest and most uncourteous epistle.

"DEAR SIR,—I send you your money. Send back the note.—Yours,

"M. SCARBOROUGH."

"I hardly expected this," said the captain to himself as he pocketed the cheque;—"at any rate not so soon. Nothing venture nothing have. That Moody is a slow coach, and will never do anything. I thought there'd be a little money about with him for a time." Then the captain turned over in his mind that night's good work with the self-satisfied air of an industrious professional worker.

But Mr. Grey was not so well satisfied with himself, and determined for a while to say nothing to Dolly of the two hundred and twenty-seven pounds which he had undoubtedly risked by the loan. But his mind misgave him before he went to sleep, and he felt that he could not be comfortable till he had made a clean breast of it. During the evening Dolly had been talking to him of all the troubles of all the Carrolls,—how Amelia would hardly speak to her father or her mother because of her injured lover, and was absolutely insolent to her, Dolly, whenever they met; how Sophia had declared that promises ought to be kept, and that Amelia should be got rid of; and how Mrs. Carroll had told her in confidence that Carroll père had come home the night before drunker than usual, and had behaved most abominably. But Mr. Grey had attended very little to all this, having his mind preoccupied with the secret of the money which he had lent.

Therefore Dolly did not put out her candle, and arrayed herself for bed in the costume with which she was wont to make her nocturnal visits. She had perceived that her father had something on his mind which it would be necessary that he should tell. She was soon summoned, and having seated herself on the bed, began the conversation. "I knew you would want me to-night."

"Why so?"

"Because you've got something to tell. It's about Mr. Barry."

"No, indeed."

"That's well. Just at this moment I seem to care about Mr. Barry more than any other trouble. But I fear that he has forgotten me altogether;—which is not complimentary."

"Mr. Barry will turn up all in proper time," said her father. "I have got

nothing to say about Mr. Barry just at present, so if you are love-lorn you had better go to bed."

"Very well. When I am love-lorn, I will. Now, what have you got to tell me?"

"I have lent a man a large sum of money;—two hundred and twenty-seven pounds!"

"You are always lending people large sums of money."

"I generally get it back again."

"From Mr. Carroll, for instance,—when he borrows it for a pair of breeches and spends it in gin-and-water."

"I never lent him a shilling. He is a burr, and has to be pacified not by loans but gifts. It is too late now for me to prevent the brother-in-lawship of poor Carroll."

"Who has got this money?"

"A professed gambler, who never wins anything and constantly loses more than he is able to pay. Yet I do think this man will pay me some day."

"It is Captain Scarborough," said Dolly. "Seeing that his father is a very rich man indeed, and as far as I can understand gives you a great deal more trouble than he is worth, I don't see why you should lend a large sum of money to his son."

"Simply because he wanted it."

"Oh dear; oh dear!"

"He wanted it very much. He had gone away a ruined man because of his gambling, and now when he had come back and was to be put upon his legs again, I could not see him again ruined for the need of such a sum. It was very foolish."

"Perhaps a little rash, papa."

"But now I have told you; and so there may be an end of it. But I'll tell you what, Dolly; I'll bet you a new straw hat he pays me within a month of his father's death." Then Dolly was allowed to escape and betake herself to her bed.

On that same day Mountjoy Scarborough went down to Tretton, and was at once closeted with his father. Mr. Scarborough had questions to ask about Mr. Prosper, and was anxious to know how his son had succeeded in his mission. But the conversation was soon turned from Mr. Prosper to Captain Vignolles and Mr. Grey. Mountjoy had determined, as soon as he had got the cheque from Mr. Grey, to say nothing about it to his father. He had told Mr. Grey in order that he need not tell his father,—if the money were forth-

coming. But he had not been five minutes in his father's room before he rushed to the subject. "You got among those birds of prey again," said his father.

"There was only one bird;—or at least two. A big bird and a small one."

"And you lost how much?" Then the captain told the precise sum. "And Grey has lent it you?" The captain nodded his head. "Then you must ride into Tretton and catch the mail to-night with a cheque to repay him. That you should have been able in so short a time to have found a man willing to fleece you! I suppose it's hopeless?"

"I cannot tell."

"Altogether hopeless."

"What am I to say, sir? If I make a promise it will go for nothing."

"For absolutely nothing."

"Then what would be the use of my promising?"

"You are quite logical, and look upon the matter in altogether a proper light. As you have ruined yourself so often, and done your best to ruin those that belong to you, what hope can there be? About this money that I have lent you, I do not know that anything farther can be said,—unless I leave it all to an hospital. It is better that you should have it and throw it away among the gamblers, than that it should fall into the hands of Augustus. Besides, the demand is moderate. No doubt it is only a beginning, but we will see."

Then he got out his cheque-book, and made Mountjoy himself write the cheque, including the two sums which had been borrowed. And he dictated the letter to Mr. Grey.

"MY DEAR GREY,—I return the money which Mountjoy has had from you;—two hundred and twenty-seven pounds, and twenty. That, I think, is right. You are the most foolish man I know with your money. To have given it to such a scape-grace as my son Mountjoy! But you are the sweetest and finest gentleman I ever came across. You have got your money now, which is a great deal more than you can have expected or ought to have obtained. However, on this occasion, you have been in great luck.—Yours faithfully,

"JOHN SCARBOROUGH."

This letter his son himself was forced to write, though it dealt altogether with his own delinquencies; and yet, as he told himself, he was not sorry to write it, as it would declare to Mr. Grey that he had

himself acknowledged at once his own sin. The only further punishment which his father exacted was that his son should himself ride into Tretton and post the letter before he ate his dinner.

"I've got my money," said Mr. Grey, waving the cheque as he went into his dressing-room with Dolly at his heels.

"Who has paid it?"

"Old Scarborough;—and he made Mountjoy write the letter himself, calling me an old fool for lending it. I don't think I was such a fool at all. However, I've got my money, and you may pay the bet and not say anything more about it."

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. V. THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL—OLD STYLE.

FREE-SCHOOL LANE runs out of one corner of the market-place; and, after twisting about for a quarter of a mile or so, comes to an end at the school-gates; through which for two centuries and more divers of the youth of Shillingbury have passed to receive within, at the hands of the head-master for the time being, instruction in the humanities, geometry, and divinity, according to the sound and excellent teaching of the Church of England by law established.

In the year of grace 1602, Christopher Sendall, a native of Shillingbury, founded the free-school; and as he was a man who all his life long had fought a hard fight with fortune, he resolved to devote a goodly portion of his substance to the foundation of an institution, which might help the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of his fellow townsmen along life's journey by smoother paths. In his own time he reared the school buildings, and endowed them with a fair estate of land lying a short distance from our cathedral city. His father was a wool-stapler in our town; but young Christopher was sent early into the office of his uncle, Master Valentine Sendall, a wealthy London merchant, to keep accounts and write out bills of lading as Geoffrey Chaucer had done before him. But the boy soon grew weary of office life. Whenever any of his uncle's ships, coming back from the Levant or the Spanish Main, cast anchor in the river, he would steal on board as often as he could, and listen with greedy ears to the tales the sailors had to tell of the wonderful lands beyond the sea. One day Master Valentine Sendall sent out a venture in his finest ship, the Scarlet Rose, to the Spanish

Main. The tall ship sailed at the ebb of the tide, about an hour before sunset; and the merchant, as he stood on his landing-stage watching her white sails while she glided away eastward down the river, told himself that, if the Scarlet Rose should have a prosperous voyage and a safe return, he would be the richest merchant in London town; but he did not know of all that lay hid in the great ship's hold. The next morning his nephew Christopher was missing. No one had seen him since the afternoon before. Search, all in vain, was made far and near; but at last one of the lads in the office confessed that he had seen the missing boy steal on board the Scarlet Rose, and dart down one of the hatchways just before she sailed. Master Sendall was much distressed; but regrets were now useless, for the Scarlet Rose was by this time running down the Channel before a fair wind.

A year and a half passed and Master Valentine began to look for tidings of his venture; but there was no sight of the good ship Scarlet Rose in the river, or news of her from the captains who came back from the Spanish Main. Two years passed and still no word of her. Master Sendall began to reckon up what his loss might be, when, one morning, a messenger came saying that on board a ship just returned from Spain, was one of the sailors who had gone out in the Scarlet Rose. The man had escaped from slavery in Barbary, whither he and some others of the crew had been carried after their capture by a Moorish pirate. He had been separated at once from his comrades, and knew not whether any of them were yet alive. Master Sendall gave him a berth in another of his ships, and set to work with redoubled care to fill up the ugly gap in his possessions made by the loss of the Scarlet Rose.

Twenty years went by and Christopher Sendall was well-nigh forgotten; when, one summer afternoon, he sailed up the river the captain of a stout ship, and the owner of many broad pieces and of much precious merchandise. He had soon escaped from his Moorish captivity, and got away on board an English ship. Since then he had passed through more adventures than would fill a volume, and by this time had had enough of knocking about the world, so he sold his ship and cargo, and betook himself to Shillingbury, where he bought a pretty little house overlooking the churchyard. There he lived the life of a recluse

for the rest of his days. At that time a man of studious habits, who watched the stars by night, and worked with strange-looking instruments at diagrams and projections by day, was pretty certain to be set down either as an astrologer or a dealer in the black art. Christopher Sendall spent well-nigh all his time in such pursuits as these; and, as he had also hung about the walls of his house a lot of rude arms and savage equipments, and stuffed birds and reptiles, it was not wonderful that he got the name of a necromancer. When in his declining years he began to build his school, wise people shook their heads, and said that money, made as his had been made, could never prosper. Even those who did not believe in the supernatural origin of his wealth had stories as to how it had been gained by piracy on the high seas; and the most charitable of all said that it must have been badly earned, otherwise he would never be so anxious to get rid of it in his lifetime.

Before he died Christopher Sendall saw his school in full working order. The rector of the parish, the head of an Oxford college, and the prime warden of one of the City companies, were the official governors. The chief duty of these gentlemen was the appointment of the head-master; and between the first of the list, Nicolas Cutts, B.A., of Corpus Christi, Oxford, and the Rev. Septimus Addlestrop, D.D., who ruled the school in my young days, there came a succession of sound scholars who lived lives of dignified ease in the comfortable house which the founder had built for them, and taught to the youth of Shillingbury just as much as they were required to teach by the terms of the founder's will.

The school-room was a well-proportioned hall, with panelled walls and an open timber roof. It was behind the school-house, which stood with its gable-end to the road, a roomy, comfortable building of red brick and cut flints. A pleasant garden lay in front of it, set out with trim grass-plots and flower-beds, bounded on two sides by a towering hedge of clipped yew, and cut off from the road by a battlemented wall, the red bricks of which were now hoary with lichen, and crowned at the top by tufts of wallflower and stunted fern. On the other side rich pastures stretched down to the river, dotted here and there with lofty trees. Just outside the garden they stood in thick clumps and formed a con-

venient resting-place for the neighbouring rooks.

Our grammar-school at the time when Dr. Addlestrop became head-master would have been very dear as an institution to the heart of Lord Eldon, for it had suffered very little change indeed in the course of two centuries and more. The fair mullioned windows with their moulded bricks and tiny diamond-shaped panes, had indeed given way, and had been replaced by hideous white painted wooden sashes, filled with squares of glass; but this was about the only outward and visible sign of change. The pupils sat on the same oaken benches, at the same desks, learning the same Latin verbs, out of the same venerable primer. A hasty observer might have set it down as a place impregnable to the attacks of change; but appearances are proverbially deceitful.

The head-masters had all of them been good, easy men; but none could have lived less laborious days than did Dr. Addlestrop. This quietude was however fallacious. The air was electric, though there were no thunderclouds to give warning of the coming storm. Lately, indeed, the number of scholars had declined; for there had been opened, in connection with the Wesleyan Chapel, a school in which such commonplace things as book-keeping, writing, geography, and history were taught—a curriculum vastly inferior no doubt to that laid down by good Master Christopher Sendall; but one preferred, nevertheless, by the Shillingbury trades-folk, who could not be brought to see that a course of six years spent in mastering the mysteries of Latin and Greek grammar was the most fitting preparation for a youth whose life was to be occupied in making shoes or trousers, or retailing tape and groceries. Thus every quarter there was a reduction in the number of the free-school boys, till at last they reached the modest and mystic number of seven.

One hot summer afternoon the seven were seated in the old school-room, importing some variety into the consideration of the Euclid they were studying by assaults upon each other's shins and knuckles, and by the consumption of apples and sweet-stuff. The doctor sat in his easy-chair, beside his desk; of late he had very seldom occupied the high, severe-looking stool behind it. He had dined early. The air was heavy and somniferous; a drowsy cawing of rooks came in through the open windows; so he naturally felt a little

sleepy. He was indeed just dropping off, in spite of the sound of munching and covert raps, when a heavy step was heard in the doorway, and a gruff voice asked where the schoolmaster was. The doctor woke with a violent start. The boys gave up fighting and eating apples, and expended all their energies in staring at the intruder who stood undismayed in the centre of the room.

"Well, my good man," said the doctor, standing up and freeing himself from the silk handkerchief which he had thrown over his head for his nap, "what do you want? What's your name? What do you want?"

"My name is Abel Whitlocke; I'm a journeyman shoemaker by trade; and I'm just come to tell you as I'm going to send my son Ezekiel Whitlocke here to school on Monday morning, and I mean him to be larnt readin' and writin' and how to do a sum."

"Oh, you've a boy you want to send to school, have you? Why didn't you set about it in a proper manner, and not come disturbing the school-work like this?"

"You calls this school-work, do you?" said Abel, picking up a Euclid and looking at the forty-eighth proposition with an expression of intense scorn. "I calls it rubbish."

"Now, my man, I've no time to argue with you. You send in your claim to Mr. Tuck, the school-clerk, and if it holds good the boy can come, and he'll be taught just the same as the others."

But Abel Whitlocke was not going to let the doctor off so easily as this. He had, ready prepared, the heads of an oration which he was determined to deliver, whether the doctor would or not, and for five minutes he held forth on the iniquities of perverted endowments, indolent stewards of the poor, and such like, and then he took his departure. When the storm had subsided the doctor called his boys up, heard them their Euclid, and then went in to attend to his private pupils.

Abel Whitlocke was a well-known figure in the place. He was not a Shillingbury man; indeed no one could say anything more definite about his origin than that he came from that strange undefined region called "the Shires." He came to us through the tramps' ward of the Union Workhouse, whither he had been carried after having been picked up, half dead with hunger and exhaustion, on the high-road. But it

turned out that he was not a professional tramp. He was a real working-man in search of work, and work he soon found with Mr. Sims, our leading shoemaker, who was just then short-handed. He worked steadily for a month or so, and then he sent over to the shires for his wife and family, and established himself as a Shillingbury working-man.

Mr. Sims found his new hand to be steady, sober, industrious, and obliging; in fact, so long as Abel Whitlocke was in the workshop, his master could find no fault in him; but Mr. Sims was very much put out with what he heard of his new workman's sayings and doings after the day's work was done.

Whitlocke was one of those born rebels against law and order and things established. The times were rather troublous. We in Shillingbury were out of the full race of the current, but in the shires there was plenty of machine-breaking and bread-riots. Inflammatory tracts were plentiful, and the memory of the Manchester martyrs was as yet green. Whitlocke had a ready gift of oratory of a rough sort, and before coming to Shillingbury had made his mark in the Midland town he had left. There the tyrannical capitalist, the English slave-driver, and the factory vampire had been the themes of his denunciation, but since he had been amongst us he had turned his attention to the blood-sucking landowner, the clerical drone, and the bloated sinecurist. Abel soon began to investigate the town charities, and very shortly he sent up to the Commissioners a flaming memorial, setting forth the corruption and iniquity of the local authorities who administered the same. Mr. Sims dropped hints in presence of his workman—meant to be taken in the most literal sense—that the cobbler had better stick to his last. Mr. Sims's more influential clients did something more than hint that he would do well to get rid of the firebrand he had picked up, but Mr. Sims felt there were two sides to this question, for the last pair of boots he had sent to Miss Kedgbury of The Latimers—Abel's handiwork—had been highly approved and pronounced equal to the best town-work.

Master Ezekiel was duly admitted to the free-school, and for a week he went on learning his "hic, hæc, hoc," as every other free boy had hitherto done, but in the course of the second Monday morning Abel walked into the school-room as before, and demanded to know why his boy had been

wasting his time over Latin instead of learning what might help him on in life.

The doctor got up angrily from his chair and ordered the intruder out of the room; but Abel stood stolidly in the middle of the floor awaiting a reply. The doctor went up to him, and taking him by the collar would have led him to the door; but Abel was an awkward customer in more senses than one. The doctor tugged and tugged, and at last—whether it was by his own exertions or by movement of Abel's will never be known—tripped and fell. In falling his head struck the corner of a desk, the blood began to flow, and the following week Abel Whitlocke was fined two pounds for an assault by the Shillingbury bench. The *Folkshire News*, the Radical organ of our county-town, opened its columns to a series of letters dealing with the past and present usefulness of Christopher Sendall's free-school at Shillingbury; its editor wrote telling leaders on the same subject; and the waters of strife were fairly let loose.

But the worst was yet to come. All this happened just a year after the Rev. Francis Northborough had become our rector. He had already done a good stroke of business in upsetting things established. He had reformed this, remodelled that, and abolished the other; and, most likely, had already got his eye fixed upon our grammar-school as the next subject of treatment. It is to be hoped Dr. Addlestrop never read a tithe of the hard things written of him in the Radical print. But, bad as they were, I doubt whether any one of them would have upset him so much as did a circular which he received one morning, stating that "a meeting would be held in the parish-room to consider what steps it might be necessary to take to bring the course of instruction at the free-school into harmony with the needs of the present time." This circular was signed "Francis Northborough, Rector."

Now Dr. Addlestrop had been the dear friend of the late rector, and this fact alone may have had something to do with the vigour with which Mr. Northborough set about reforming Christopher Sendall's foundation. Most of the things which Dr. Unwin had tolerated were to the new rector simply abuses, and there is no reason to suppose that he took a more favourable view of Dr. Addlestrop than of any of the rest.

The meeting was largely attended. The rector in opening the proceedings made a very clever speech, which must have been

as gall and wormwood to Dr. Addlestrop, though it was loudly cheered by Abel Whitlocke. He reminded his hearers that, long ago, a Shillingbury man had given to his native town a rich bequest, in order that every boy might receive, free of cost, that education which was, according to the feeling of that age, the best. No man could have cherished a nobler aspiration. The nature of the gift was a proof that the founder's mind was, in the truest sense of the word, a liberal one. In his lifetime men were just beginning to see the benefit of high learning, and the terms of Christopher Sendall's will did certainly offer to the boys of Shillingbury the best education the times could give; but it was hardly necessary to say that in the last two hundred and forty years the educational needs of the people had changed. The catalogue of knowledge had received vast additions; but the scheme of instruction at the free-school remained the same. He was not come there to blame those who administered the school; but simply to put to the meeting two questions. Did the school, as it was now conducted, serve present needs in the best manner? and was it likely that Christopher Sendall, if he were now alive, would wish boys in the nineteenth century to be taught according to the fashion of the sixteenth? The rector wound up with a few remarks, meant presumably to be consolatory to Dr. Addlestrop; but the poor old gentleman, as he listened to them, felt as if cold water were running down his spine and he himself being held up before the gaze of the assembly as the very impersonation of sinecure uselessness.

When the rector had finished the doctor got upon his legs. As he rose there came from Abel Whitlocke a subdued groan, which made one half of the meeting laugh and the other look exceedingly solemn and severe. At his best he was a poor speaker, and now, when he had been listening for the last half-hour to words which seemed to his ears to be the very spirit of pillage and sacrilege, he stumbled along in confusion over his laboured pleas for the sanctity of founders' intentions and his denunciations of the disrespect shown in other places to the memory of the dead, ending with an expression of hope that the name of Shillingbury might never be added to the shameful list.

Before the meeting dispersed a resolution was carried that a petition should be sent up to the constituted authorities for a new scheme for the government of the free-

school, and before very long this instrument was sent down to the head-master. As he read it Dr. Addlestrop was inclined to utter the cry of despairing Cain. A new set of trustees were appointed, the rector at their head; the ordinary course of instruction was to be a sound English education; any boys whose parents were ambitious on their behalf might be taught "the knowledge of book-keeping by double and single entry, mensuration and land surveying, and the elements of physic and chemistry." Latin, Greek, and French were also to be taught on request, and, to aid the head-master in his additional duties, an assistant was to be provided at a salary of sixty pounds per annum.

Dr. Addlestrop was an Oxford graduate of eighty years ago; and it will not be difficult to realise his feelings as he read the scheme, or to see how eminently fitted he was to carry out the same. To begin with he had the fine old Oxford contempt for mathematics, and it is doubtful whether his arithmetic would have stood the test of a sum in inverse proportion. It need hardly be said that book-keeping, land surveying, chemistry, and physics, were about as familiar to him as the Greek Anthology was to Abel Whitlocke. It was plain therefore that the assistant at a salary of sixty pounds per annum would need to be a man of many parts. Indeed, if he was to be called upon to take all the work which lay beyond the doctor's powers, it were hard to see what there would be left for the latter to do.

But a few months' experience of the new scheme convinced the doctor that unless he could turn over all the teaching to his new assistant Mr. Rasker, and retreat altogether to his study, all pleasure in life would be gone. Mr. Rasker was a red-haired, raw-boned, shambling young man with a scarcity of aspirates in his enunciation and a superabundance of mourning rim round his finger-nails. The doctor hated his person and despised his qualifications; still he was afraid of him. He put a bold front upon it once or twice, and attempted to teach something which the "powers that be" demanded; but after he had been twice corrected by Mr. Rasker before the whole school, he began to consider seriously whether things could go on as they were much longer.

The fact was that the doctor would have resigned his mastership at once—he was fairly well off and independent of his salary—had not his resignation involved

the relinquishment of the school-house, and this was a possibility he could not bring himself to face. It had been his home for more than thirty years, and he knew and loved every stone in the walls and every tree in the garden. The idea of giving it up to any one else was frightful, but not so bad as that of having to seek a new home for himself.

Sir Thomas Kedgbury of The Latimers, our baronet, was a very close friend of the doctor's, and he soon became a partaker in the doctor's sorrows. He entered fully into his old friend's feelings and advised him to do nothing in haste. "Tucker is coming down here in September," he said, "and perhaps we may be able to get him to help us. He owes me a good turn, and now is the time to put in my claim."

Mr. Pendleton Tucker was a gentleman holding high office in the existing ministry. He had previously been an Endowments' Commissioner, and it was generally understood that his word was still very potent with the board. Before his guest had been many hours at The Latimers, Sir Thomas had opened the question of Dr. Addlestrop and the free-school. "It would be better for him and the school too if he would retire; but I believe it would kill him to leave the house. Couldn't they let him keep it for the rest of his life? Of course he'd find another for the new man. There's one unoccupied close to the school that would suit exactly."

Mr. Tucker looked very grave, and said he didn't think the Commissioners would hear of it; then he agreed to ask them, and finally promised to do all he could to back up his request. Sir Thomas, when he heard this, regarded the matter as settled, and sure enough in less than a month he was able to inform his old friend that, whenever he should send in his resignation, the Commissioners, in consideration of his long services, would allow him to occupy, for the rest of his life, the school-house; subject to the condition that he should provide a residence, conveniently situated, for the new head-master. The doctor sent in his resignation; but, hardly was this matter completed when the ministry, overwhelmed by a sudden storm which had sprung up out of a very tiny cloud, sent in their resignations likewise. The doctor was a little uneasy when he heard of the crisis, still he never thought but that the promise made by Mr. Pendleton Tucker would stand good; but

by ill luck it happened that, simultaneously with the change of ministry, a great change was made in the constitution of the Endowments' Commission. Sir Thomas Square, a man of unlimited red-tape and unbending rigour as to "the rule of the office," became the presiding chairman of the board, and when the papers relating to the special circumstances under which Dr. Addlestrop had resigned were brought up, there was an ominous frown upon the chairman's brow. The name of Mr. Pendleton Tucker was whispered by one of the older Commissioners; but as Mr. Tucker was no longer a Secretary of State, and as he was a man Sir Thomas Square particularly disliked, this whisper did not much help Dr. Addlestrop's cause.

The school trustees at once set about electing a new master. The candidates were neither numerous nor distinguished, but the trustees were fairly satisfied with the testimonials of the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke, whom they elected. Mr. Tulke was a practical man, very much awake to his own interests, so he sent immediately a surveyor over to Shillingbury to negotiate with Dr. Addlestrop as to the valuation of fixtures, etc.; for the trustees when they elected Mr. Tulke were supposed to know nothing of that promise made by Mr. Tucker to the doctor, and Mr. Tulke, when he was elected, naturally expected to be put in possession of all the emoluments appertaining to the head-mastership, the school-house included. It was whispered, too, that Mr. Northborough, when Sir Thomas spoke to him about Mr. Pendleton Tucker's promise, had remarked that Mr. Tucker was a very influential man doubtless, but that the Commissioners would hardly treat his opinions as to the management of the trustees' own property with more deference than those of the trustees themselves.

The untoward apparition of the surveyor raised in the doctor's breast serious apprehensions. No communication of any sort had come from the Commission, and at last, worn out by suspense, he wrote a letter to the secretary in which he recited the promise made to him by the Commissioners through Mr. Tucker, and begged that the Board would assure him of its confirmation.

But before his letter reached the secretary, that gentleman had been favoured with several on the same business from the Rev. Francis Northborough, one of the free-school trustees, and perhaps Mr. Northborough's remarks as to Dr.

Addlestrop's future residence may have had something to do with the character of the letter which, after ten days' interval, the doctor received in answer. It was couched in the stiffest official terms, and simply stated that the Commissioners had determined that it would be undesirable for the head-master to reside elsewhere than in the school-house, and now requested Dr. Addlestrop to vacate the same in a month's time.

After he received this letter he sat the whole morning in his study, not daring to show it to his wife, who was, if possible, more attached to the place than he was himself; but it had to be done, and when the poor old people knew each other's grief, they were almost heart-broken; but Mrs. Addlestrop, though she had always passed as the weaker vessel, possessed in her character a store of helpful strength which the doctor lacked entirely. It was she who faced bravely the hateful task of searching for a new home and packing their cherished household gods for removal, while her husband sat helplessly by the fire or worked laboriously at a long letter to the Commissioners complaining of the ill turn they had done him.

The last day came. Mrs. Addlestrop arranged that all the furniture, except that in the doctor's study, should be packed while he was in his own room undisturbed by the workmen. They ate their last breakfast at the library-table. The good woman kept up a show of cheerfulness, and even joked about the pens and paper-knives getting mixed up with the cups and saucers. After the meal was over she went to her packing, leaving the doctor to make a fair copy of his letter to the Commissioners.

She was hard at work all the morning with the upholsterer's men. Once, when she went out into the garden, she saw through the window her husband seated at the writing-table, apparently reading over what he had written, and when one o'clock came, she went into the room, carrying the luncheon-tray in her own hands. He still sat at his work and did not heed her as she set out the lunch on a side-table. When she had done she called him to come and eat; but he did not answer. She went up to him and touched him on the shoulder, but he did not move; and when she put her hand caressingly upon his face, she found that he was cold and dead. Death had been more merciful than Sir Thomas Square and the Rev. Francis Northborough.

MISAPPLIED EPITHETS.

IN every human mind there is a tendency towards symbolism. That of the untutored savage scarcely finds verbal expression but through the medium of imagery and metaphor derived from the natural objects which environ his daily life; the glowing hyperbole of those Oriental races, whose early history is almost identical with the first records of man's existence upon the earth, has come down unchanged from the beginning of time to the present hour; and among the most civilised peoples, ancient or modern, the tropes and similes of the poet have always commanded the highest admiration. Still stronger evidence of this inherent predilection for allegory is to be found in the fact that the most prosaic and unimaginative persons unconsciously resort to fanciful conceits in times of mental excitement from any cause, pleasurable or the reverse, such fancies and figures usually taking the form of comparison of individuals with concrete actualities which lie outside the pale of humanity, but which are brought more or less familiarly under our notice in the process of human affairs. That comparisons or epithets of this class should be largely drawn from the animal world is not to be wondered at, seeing how constantly and intimately we are brought into contact with the lower orders of creation, and how much more forcibly they impress our ideas than any association of inanimate objects can do; but it is certainly curious that so many of them should be accepted by universal consent in a perverted application. Take, for instance, those derived from the dog. Of all creatures there is none which holds so high a place in our esteem. Nobody despises a dog; even those who are not themselves canine "fanciers" are willing to admit the brute's good qualities. Fidelity, courage, devotion, intelligence, and affection, all entitle it to rank as the friend of man, and such is the picture commonly conjured up by mention of it in living personality. Yet, as an abstraction, "dog" or "hound" becomes one of the grossest terms of opprobrium which can be used, while "puppy," an incarnation of playfulness and innocence in its real presentment, expresses the most profound and offensive contempt.

Why, again, should the harmless, necessary cat be compelled to pose as an embodiment of malice in this attributive

metonymy, and her endearing title "puss" sometimes resolve itself, when applied to a girl, into a contemptuous disparagement? Still more unjust is the spirit of the epithet which has made the ass a proverb and a by-word of scorn as an emblem of the most intense stupidity. A donkey is very little inferior to a pony in intellect, and undoubtedly has more brains than a cow. Patience and docility are the true asinine characteristics which should have been seized upon for purposes of illustration, while "silly as a sheep" (with the propriety of which no one will be tempted to quarrel) would remain wherewith to write down certain people instead. Fish, for some mysterious reason—or mysterious absence of it—are invariably banned as queer, loose, or odd, and things which are spoken of as "fishy," are understood to be on a suspicious footing; but the vituperative Americanisms, "scaly" and "slimy," owe their origin to the idea of the serpent, and are used subjectively—the latter perpetuating a vulgar error, for serpents are not slimy. The wisdom with which the reptile is accredited implies wariness in eluding capture. Naturalists are not yet agreed as to whether the adder is actually deaf or not; but, at any rate, it is no harder of hearing than other snakes, that it should be set up as the symbol for those whose auditory nerves are dull of perception. A most extraordinary perversion, too, is that which adopts the monkey or ape as an ideal of comparison for a person who displays the faculty of mimicry or imitation in a marked degree. Monkeys are agile, mischievous, and inquisitive, and indeed the term is sometimes employed in the sense of each of those traits; but, though all sorts of wonderful tales have been concocted about their putting on their masters' smoking-caps and spectacles, and writing letters of their own accord, no one ever saw a monkey "ape" a particular action or movement, or do anything which, considered apart from its physical likeness to the human frame, was more suggestive of mocking than a similar proceeding on the part of a dog or kitten.

Mighty hunters, often styled "lion"-hearted themselves for their fearlessness of big game, tell us that the king of beasts is by no means as courageous as he has been represented, but is in truth of a rather sneaking disposition—a sad blow to one's preconceived notions of the noble cat, but probably a fortunate circumstance on the whole. What the bear and pig

have done to be stigmatised in this connection as the surliest and most selfish of animals respectively is not apparent, though the chronic affliction of a sore head under which the former appears to labour might afford excuse for some little infirmity of temper. "Swinish," however, refers exclusively to gluttonous propensity. A man who devours an enormous quantity of food may be a "cormorant," but must be guilty of moral rapacity before he can be designated a "vulture." Is a goose really possessed of less intelligence than a duck, or the "wise hens" that looked upon Joaquin Miller with the head askew? A mule is spiteful and treacherous rather than persistently stubborn before it is properly broken, after which it is the most tractable of quadrupeds; cubs of all species may be distinguished by an exuberance of spirits, but are not the mentally distorted and unlovely things that become their namesake in the genus homo; and the blindness of the bat, which seeks its prey in the gloaming, is as incomprehensible as the inebriation of a "biled owl." The very unflattering epithet "beast," is used to denote one who indulges the appetite to excess—which, by the way, a beast rarely, if ever, does—while "brute" more frequently signifies a perpetrator of cruelty, bodily, mental, or moral.

It is inconsistent, to say the least of it, that while "imp" has always a playful meaning, "demon" and "fiend" are the strongest possible terms of execration, and "devil" is only applied in the same sense by us, any lighter use of the word being deemed profane; but in many countries it is employed archly, almost in endearment, though "diabolical" invariably retains a serious import. "Demon" has assumed the form of a complimentary prefix of late, conferred on those who excel in certain sports. "Wretch" bears two interpretations, expressive of misfortune and crime, ideas which usually range themselves in diametric opposition to each other in the mind. "Turk," "Bohemian," and "Jew" tell their own tale; but it is thought by those who are closely acquainted with the Ethiopian race, that the phrase, "to work like a nigger," was invented by someone not well informed as to the manners and customs of the children of Ham. Lastly, ought not a "wet blanket," when the function of that article is taken into account, to become the banner of a peace-maker rather than an obstructionist to legitimate mirth?

THE DREAM.

In the dream I dreamt to-night
Love came, armed with magic might:
Fret and fever, doubt and fear,
Foes that haunt his kingdom here,
Misconception, vain regretting,
Bootless longing, cold forgetting,
The dark shades of change and death,
Ever hovering on his path;
Vanished, from or sound or sight,
In the dream I dreamt to-night.

Time's strong hand fell helpless down;
Fate stood dazed without her frown;
Sly suspicion, cold surprise,
Faded 'neath the happy eyes;
And the voice I love was speaking,
And the smile I love was making
Sunshine in the golden weather,
Where we two stood close together;
For you reigned in royal right,
In the dream I dreamt to-night.

And I woke, and woke to see
A cold world, bare and blank to me,
A world whose stare and sneer scarce hidden,
Told me that as fruit forbidden,
Love and trust must ever pine
In so sad a clasp as mine;
All too faint and fragile grown,
For gifts that youth holds all its own;
Ah, best to wake, forgetting quite,
The sweet dream I dreamt to-night.

THE NEW MRS. WILDE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

THE coast of Cornwall is undoubtedly a very pleasant, pretty, and wildly picturesque country to read about. But, when one has lived on it for a lengthened period, one is apt to believe in the veracity of the lines which describe its weather, and which run as follows:

The west wind comes, and brings us rain,
The east wind blows it back again;
The south wind brings us rainy weather,
The north wind cold and rain together.
When the sun in red doth set,
The next day, surely, will be wet;
But if the sun should set in grey,
The next will be a rainy day.
When buds the ash before the oak,
Then that year there'll be a soak;
But should the oak precede the ash,
Then expect a rainy splash!

It is after a day that, commencing with a soak before noon, had turned into a splash later, there came the fair evening with its many tinted atmosphere on which this story opens.

A balmy May evening it is, that encourages the sodden leaves and blossoms to lift up their heads; that induces the lilacs and hawthorns to yield their perfumes; that compels the birds, whose plumage is still heavy with wet, to send forth hilarious strains; and that lures even the neuralgic out into the open air.

Out from between the high garden-

gates, that give entrance into one of the prettiest places in the neighbourhood, comes a young lady, driving a little pony wagonette full of young children. The young lady's fair, sweet face is grave unto sadness; the children look frightened and bewildered. For, in the house from which they have just come for change of air and relief of thought, their mother is lying sick unto death, and they love her so!

These little Wildes are three very attractive little girls of fifteen, fourteen, and thirteen, and the young lady who is driving them is Miss Dunstan, their governess.

Ella Dunstan is the second daughter of a clergyman endowed with a small living, and a large family, in the heart of London. But it is only because her health has failed in the crowded metropolitan district in which her father's charge is, that "the family" have at last consented to her swelling the governess ranks, for the sake of the bracing Cornish air, and the life-renewing sea-water bathing.

She has been with the Wildes now for three months, and already her graceful manners, tender thought for them, sympathy, and sweet looks, have endeared her to the children, and made their mother bless Ella for her residence among them. Of Mr. Wilde she knows comparatively little. He is an austere man, given to study and seclusion, fond of his children, but reserved with them. Fond of his wife, too, but cold to her, because she has no understanding of the way in which this coldness of his can be met and overcome.

Withal he is a good husband, a just and affectionate father, a trustworthy friend, and a man whose spotless business, social, and domestic careers are examples to the neighbourhood.

But Ella Dunstan knows little of him, and cares less for him. She is never able to disassociate the ideas of him and sternness, though in reality there has never been aught of sternness in his demeanour to her, or to anyone else that she can put her finger upon. But Ella's keen, easily aroused sympathies are all with the wife, and the wife never seems to be perfectly satisfied with her lot, or local habitation.

And this local habitation is altogether charming. A picturesquely irregular and very comfortable house, situated in the midst of lawns, and terraces, and pleasure-grounds; with a high walled garden on one side of it, in which are vineries and peach-houses, and hot-beds running over with

melons; with stables full of good horses and ponies, a meadow full of cows, and a dairy in which duchesses might make butter.

No, it is evident that, charming as all these possessions are, they fail to charm the mistress of them into a perfectly satisfied frame of mind.

Perhaps it is that delicate health, which has been her portion for years, has weakened her powers of appreciation and enjoyment. At any rate, these powers have been in abeyance for some time, and now the end is near, and all around the poor lady know that her hold on life is a very limp one.

Ella Dunstan's thoughts are very busy about Mrs. Wilde this evening, as she drives along a wild, barren, broken-down, disfigured road. Her thoughts are busy, and her heart is full of pity for the dying mother and the sweet children who will soon be motherless. But at the same time she is driving the high-spirited pony with all her knowledge and skill, and she has abundance of both.

Suddenly, how it happens none of them can ever tell, Pixie stumbles and comes down with a smash upon his stout little knees. The shafts break, the oak village-cart turns over on its side, and Miss Dunstan and her charges are deposited in the hedgerow among the hard sharp flints, the heath, the gorse, and the yellow broom.

They are none of them hurt but Pixie. If Ella's own arm or leg could have been broken instead of Pixie's knees, the girl would have been far better content, but when she extricates herself from the huddled heap into which they have all fallen, it is to find the children, happily, unhurt and unfrightened, and Pixie's knees broken and bleeding.

And only this morning at breakfast she had heard Mr. Wilde say that he would "not take thirty-five pounds for Pixie."

The poor, conscientious, high-hearted young governess goes slowly home this day with a heavier weight on her heart than she has ever carried there before. She misguidedly insists on thinking that it was because she was plunged in thought that Pixie, the pony, had fallen and marred the symmetry of his valuable knees. Whereas, in reality, Pixie fell because the road was like a billiard-table with a few balls rolling about on it.

It is in vain that the children tell her that "papa won't care a bit, as they are none of them hurt." She can't take comfort in this promise. Pixie was worth

thirty-five pounds to his owner this morning, and now he is worth nothing.

She makes up her mind as to what she will do as she drives back, and when she comes into the Wildes' grounds, which are full of sweet spring scents of lilac, and may, and sweet-briar, she sees Mr. Wilde walking solemnly along, backwards and forwards, on the terrace in front of the room where his sick wife is lying on a couch.

She sees the children into the house, and under the charge of their maid, and then she nerves herself for the sacrifice, and goes out to him.

He pauses in his monotonous promenade as she comes softly upon him—pauses partly in surprise, but more in displeasure. He likes to have efficient people about him—cooks, butlers, grooms, gardeners, and governesses, who never appeal to him, but who do all things as he would have them done without consulting or worrying him. This sudden and unexpected apparition of Miss Dunstan, in a difficulty evidently, is more than he can bear patiently.

"What is it?" he asks impatiently. "I can hear neither reports nor complaints of the children to-day."

"I have never made either to you, Mr. Wilde," she responds in a firm, proud voice which compels him to listen to her. "I have intruded upon you now to tell you of a catastrophe which has happened to Pixie through my agency, for which I must pay."

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"Pixie. He has fallen and smashed his knees. You valued him at thirty-five pounds this morning; if you will let me stay here six months I can pay for him by foregoing my salary."

"Are you serious in saying this?"

"I am in earnest," she replies.

"Miss Dunstan, what do you take me for? Are you content to stay in the house of a man whom you must regard as an unprincipled extortioner, or you would never have made the offer you have. Are you hurt? He stumbled in the trap, I fear?"

"Your children are unhurt."

"But you! are you sure you have received no injury—no shock?"

There is genuine kindness in his tone, and she responds to it gratefully:

"None whatever, Mr. Wilde; I have escaped scot-free, but you must let me do as I ask you in this matter. I have injured a piece of property belonging to another person which was valued at thirty-five

pounds. If I don't pay for the damage done I shall feel myself to be under such a weight of obligation that I shall not be able to stay here."

"As you please, as you please," he says hurriedly, "only don't speak of leaving my poor children now; they will soon have no one——"

He stops, choked by unwonted emotion, and the remembrance that his wife's window is open immediately above the spot where they are standing. This remembrance gives him a slightly uncomfortable feeling, for he knows well that his poor wife has a habit of conjecturing, till oftentimes the intangibilities about which she conjectures assume material form and substance in her mind's eye, and harass her.

"I feel happier now you have acceded to my request," Ella Dunstan says brightly, and then he takes off his hat solemnly and bows with an air that tells her plainly that he considers the interview at an end, and does not desire to be intruded upon any longer.

By-and-by he gathers a few of the fairest, most delicately-scented spring flowers, and takes them up to Mrs. Wilde, who takes them with the air of one who feels a peace-offering is being made to her.

"What secrets were you and Miss Dunstan talking about just now?" she asks. "I heard her say that unless you let her make some return for some kindness you have shown her, she couldn't stay."

Then he tries to make all clear to her by telling her of the accident to Pixie, and of Miss Dunstan's perverse determination to pay for it.

"Pixie was my pony; I'm sorry other people are allowed to drive her," she says in a hurt tone.

"My poor dear Kitty, you like your daughters to get plenty of air; you don't—I'm sure you don't mean that they are not to drive Pixie."

"They may drive Pixie, if Pixie is ever fit to be driven again; but no one else will be allowed to do it, if my wishes are attended to."

From this evening Ella Dunstan sees less and less daily of her pupils' mother. When, according to custom, Ella pays her daily visit to the sick-room, Mrs. Wilde is either dozing, or too weak to speak to anyone but her children or the nurse. The sensitive spirit of the girl feels this, and so it comes about in time that her fear of intruding upon the suffering mistaken

woman prevents her going into Mrs. Wilde's presence at all.

The girl leads a lonely life in these days, for the children, affectionate and companionable as they are, do not fill the vacuum which is made in her mental life through the abrupt withdrawal of more mature intercourse. Partially self-banished from Mrs. Wilde's society, Ella Dunstan finds herself completely overlooked and forgotten by Mrs. Wilde's husband.

He breakfasts earlier than the governess and children, he dines later, and never eats lunch. Accordingly the gentleman whose children she is training and Miss Dunstan rarely meet, save on Sundays when they are coming out of church in the morning.

At last poor Mrs. Wilde ebbs out of existence, and in silent sorrowfulness her husband shuts himself up, and mourns for her in seclusion which none dare to invade.

For many days he does not see his young daughters, and when at length Miss Dunstan persuades them to go uninvited into the study in which he secludes himself, the sight of their black dresses, wistful faces, and tearful eyes, gives him a depressing shock from which he is long in recovering. And it is many weeks before he thinks of Miss Dunstan, far less of enquiring about her. When he does do this, he finds that she has gone from his house, leaving the children under the care of a maiden sister of his late wife's, who has come forward unasked to take so many of that departed sister's duties upon her as is permissible.

"What could have induced Miss Dunstan to leave us at such a time as this, when she is more necessary than ever?" he says to Violet, his eldest daughter, and Violet tells him promptly:

"It is Aunt Minnie's doing, papa; she told Miss Dunstan that it wasn't proper for her to go on living here, so Miss Dunstan went away, though it nearly broke her heart to leave us, and ours to part with her."

"I shall write and ask her to come back," he says, and Violet's beaming look of gratitude convinces him that by so doing he will be consulting the real happiness of his children.

Accordingly, in the teeth of vigorous and eloquent opposition from Aunt Minnie, Mr. Wilde writes such an appeal to Miss Dunstan to come back and take care of his motherless girls, as melts her resolve

not to put herself in the way of being censured by Miss Minnie Watson again.

Two or three days after the receipt of Mr. Wilde's letter, the three children have the delight of fetching her from the railway-station with Pixie (whose knees have mended themselves very successfully by this time) and the trap.

They are all surprised when on her arrival at Glenthorne, Mr. Wilde comes out to give her a hearty greeting and welcome.

"I thought you wouldn't be cruel enough to stay away from us," he says earnestly, taking her two hands in his cordial clasp, and Ella, blushing with pleasure at the unexpected demonstration of friendly feeling, and looking prettier than she has ever looked before, assures him of her joy in being back with the children.

But to balance the exuberant gladness displayed by the others, Miss Watson shows an unmistakably grim sense of this "return of the governess" being an altogether reprehensible, not to say an improper, proceeding. Miss Watson's attitude is hostile from the first. She bows her head with the scantiest indication of civility, and clasps her hands firmly in front of her as a sign that she has no intention of admitting Miss Dunstan to those terms of equality indicated by hand-shaking.

The plain facts of the case are these: Miss Watson has a sanguine spirit, and does not despair of the Bill for legalising marriages with deceased wives' sisters passing. Miss Ella Dunstan is "disgracefully pretty" for a governess, who may stand in Miss Minnie Watson's way. And Glenthorne is one of those places which seem specially designed for picturesque love-making and happy marriage.

"Miss Dunstan and the children will dine with us from to-day, Minnie," her brother-in-law says to her when Ella—surrounded by the children—has run up to her room.

"Such an arrangement is opposed to all my views, Robert; it was never so while your poor dear wife lived," Minnie says tremulously; but he feels that the tremulousness is produced by anger and not by affection, and so he disregards it.

"I think I shall have my views carried out, Minnie," he says good-temperedly, and Minnie Watson bows to the inevitable with the best grace she can command.

"I presume that you do not wish me to make Miss Dunstan my companion?" she asks, and he replies:

"Certainly not. I want my daughters to get all the good that can be got out of her society. The less you interfere with them the better Violet and I will be pleased."

Time rolls on, bringing with it many changes in the household at Glenthorne. For one thing, and that an important one, Mr. Wilde ceases to seclude himself from his family. He takes the keenest interest in the studies which his girls are pursuing so successfully under Miss Dunstan's auspices, and frequently accompanies them in their botanising and sketching expeditions.

Meantime the charms of Miss Watson do not strengthen for her brother-in-law, and the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill still hangs fire.

Aunt Minnie's reign is not a popular one, either with children or servants. Dressed in a little brief authority, she gives herself a good deal of rope in the exercise of that authority. In the matter of servants' "days out," she works a perhaps wholesome but extremely unpalatable reform. So with regard to sundry perquisites which they have hitherto enjoyed. She keeps house on a hard and suspicious system, and deems it the first duty of the mistress of a house to be always "after the servants," as she phrases it.

Even the butler's pantry does not escape her vigilant inspection. She detects at a glance if a glassful has been taken from a decanter, and is always beseeching Mr. Wilde to let her keep the keys and the cellar-book. As for the cook, who has reigned in the kitchen for fourteen years, and never failed to give satisfaction hitherto, she has a pitifully humiliating part to play now, for Miss Minnie Watson doles out butter and cream and eggs so sparingly, that half cook's best dishes are spoilt for want of sufficient materials.

Disaffection reigns in the house, but of a smouldering and scarcely perceptible order. The servants are all attached to their master, and so they stay on, bending their necks to Miss Minnie Watson with patience that is born of their belief that her day is nearly over.

They are not mistaken in this belief. One day, about six months after Mrs. Wilde's death, Ella Dunstan and Mr. Wilde find themselves wandering through a laurel-bordered alley under pretence of

looking for flowers for the children's evening lesson on botany. The pretty little governess is no longer keenly anxious to have the "sweet girls" with her on all occasions. She "likes to have a solitary stroll at least once a day," she tells them. And if this is really the case it must be distressing to her that in the course of this would-be solitary stroll, she invariably meets Mr. Wilde.

In truth, the girl's character has grown less noble during these last weeks under the influence of the fixed determination to which she has come to marry her employer and secure a luxurious home, though she has not a particle of love for him.

Pretty Ella Dunstan has had her romance. She has loved desperately and unselfishly, but the man she loved is as poor as herself. She will forget him, she tells herself, and will have a delightful home in which she will always be well cared for, and to which she can invite her brothers and sisters, and the command of a good income.

Her heart is ice towards the man whom she means to marry, but it throbs with exultation at the thought of how absolutely she will be able to rule him through the force of the fire of his love for her. For she has melted his barrier of cold reserve, and it is her triumph to know that the more she freezes her own manner, the more intense will be the fervour of his desire to thaw it. To-day, as they stroll along between the laurel hedges, she feels that the crisis is rapidly approaching, and in spite of sundry pangs of heart and conscience as she remembers the poor old love and the vows and kisses which she and he have exchanged, she is filled with exultation at the thought of soon being the mistress of beautiful Glenthorne.

Mr. Wilde words his offer of marriage very clearly and simply:

"I ask you to be my wife, Ella, in the firm conviction that ours will be a real marriage. I shouldn't have ventured to offer myself to a girl so much younger than myself, if you had not let me see that my society is as dear to you as yours is to me."

It was taking her consent for granted in a way she did not like at all, but still she would not resent this yet, for she was conscious that she had been feigning fondness for him very cleverly.

So she put her hand into his very frankly,

and gave him the promise he asked for, and resolved to drug her memories, and be a good if not a very affectionate wife to him.

THE WORLD ON WHEELS.

WHILE opinions may be divided as to the artistic merits of the great building in the Cromwell Road, there can be no doubt of this, that it looks very well in the sunshine. The building, clear and crisp in all its imposing mass, glows with a pleasant warmth and colour, and basks in the unaccustomed brightness; while all the terracotta animals that adorn its parapets seem to participate in the general spring-like feeling—the canine ones you can fancy shaking their coats and stretching themselves after four months of dulness and drizzle, while the feline animals might be meditating a good wash-up as they blink their eyes with a decided tendency to purr. But what is to be said of the delight of certain beings of less hardly baked clay, little urchins of ages ranging from nine years to perhaps nine months, at any rate to the lowest possible age at which a child can be expected to run alone: urchins who are negotiating the dignified perron of the museum, the little ones dragging up the lesser ones, and what with crawling, climbing, and jumping, making their way with determination to the hospitable doors that swing freely open for all the world, and making us realise for the first time a novel aspect of the utility of a public museum as a capital place for mothers to turn in their children, in full confidence that they will be carefully looked after and kept out of mischief.

On a Saturday morning, too, when the house-mother is most busy, and there is no school-bell to hurry the youngsters out of the way, and a bright Saturday like this when the sunshine, bursting into dingy rooms, seems to insist on a general clearing up and cleaning. Else for the masculine half of the working world the day seems to bring suggestions of ease and good cheer. The trowel rings all the sharper and clearer, in the knowledge that it is soon to be laid aside, and the labourers with their hods swarm up and down the ladders with a blithe and cheery air, while the cannikins that are pretty sure to be clinking wherever the British workman is within hearing, are clinking now to a brisker measure. All the world seems to expand and unfold in the unaccustomed

brightness and warmth—all the world and his wife, with his little children, who are now scrambling up the museum steps.

They bear their own contribution, too, to the wonders of the show. Billy, who leads the way, has under his arm a fine specimen of the spotted gee-gee—an animal almost as big as himself, and for which the smooth tessellated flooring of the big hall will afford a splendid race-track. But there always lingers something bitter in the cup. There are too many policemen peering about just now, and Billy, who is as sharp as a needle, doesn't need to be told that his appearance in triumph upon his steed, with Polly pushing behind, and Jenny lugging at the handle, will not be favourably looked upon by the guardians of order. And so Billy resolutely tucks his steed under his arm again, and moves on with his train of admiring friends, quite deaf to the suggestion of a friendly-looking man in a brown coat, "Ye'd better leave it with the man who takes care of the umbrellas."

Our friend in the brown coat, with the brown eyes, and reddish-brown hair, is not a regular attendant at the museum. He is from the Midlands rather, from somewhere about Shakespeare's country, and he regards the great hall in which we stand with approval mixed with some dissatisfaction. "Now if we had a grand building like this up in the Midlands, we wouldn't leave it half empty just for the little weans to paddle about in." But here our friend is unjust. He doesn't know that about every other day a furniture van crammed with objects leaves "the old shop," as the Bloomsbury establishment is sometimes familiarly called, and is here emptied into the craving void of the rows of empty cases, while as an evidence of progress here is the skeleton of the great sperm whale with its long jointed tail reminding one of the dragon of ancient fame, to say nothing of the birds in a little nook of their own—the typical birds which are honoured by a place in the index collection. Our Midland friend there, looks upon the whale with something like contempt. He had just slipped in, he tells us, thinking he might get a hint or two from animal mechanism, in the matter of an invention he was working out. But the sight of that mountainous skeleton has rather saddened him. There is sad waste of power involved in that enormous framework, in the power to drive that huge and clumsy fabric; and to carry what?—a set of organs that in capacity for feeling and enjoyment were not of a

hundredth part of the value of those of Master Billy with his spotted horse.

"Now, if you want to see a neat little bit of machinery," added the Midlander modestly, with an air of neither inviting nor shrinking from comparisons, "just come and see my exhibit at our little show down here."

The exhibit being in the way of tricycles, and the show at the Albert Hall close by, we creep into the hall by a back door close to a great pile of crates, as if there were a big poultry-show going on. But these are a different kind of flyers, the machines we are looking for, and the lift takes us up to the top storeys among the glittering ranks of the latest products of the hour in the way of cycling apparatus. As for the bicycle, there is little to be said about it. The machine seems to have reached as near perfection as possible, but the tricycle comes upon one as something of a revelation in the possibilities of its future career, while the greater complexity of its structure and the faults and failures that are possibly latent in the most promising combinations, give an absorbing kind of interest to the studies of the intending purchaser. And the great question of the day, according to our conductor, is simply this: What is to be the machine of the future, and who is to make it?

Certainly, the extension of the use of the tricycle is something marvellous. A few years ago the three-wheeled machine was something to be stared out, and now the rush of them is everywhere, and while the bicyclist is temporarily driven off the road by the heavy roads of winter, the tricyclist still holds his ground and spins merrily along or grinds doggedly through the mud in defiance of the weather. The country parson is a great supporter of the new machine. The country doctor is following suit. Here in one of the stalls is a strong red-painted machine that, besides its driver, carries a stout canvas locker inscribed V.R., Royal Mail, and is used by country postmen over their long but no longer weary rounds. In the wide-awake Midlands the police have taken the tricycle into use and pursue offenders on the flying wheels. We hear too of excisemen—time out of mind called ride-officers, and supposed to scour the country on horseback—who now drive themselves about on the useful machine. And indeed the Civil Service generally seems to rally to the tricycle. You may spy the article under

the colonnade of Somerset House or in the solemn quadrangle of the Admiralty, and it is not unknown even at the Horse Guards, where you may see a giant warrior in steel and gold upon his massive steed, keeping his eye upon one of the slender machines with its spider-wheels.

One of the strangest developments of the wheel movement is in its Eastern propaganda. Imagine a stately rajah deserting his palanquin and taking to a tricycle—not working the treadles himself, but with a couple of coolies behind whirling his highness along under his gilded canopy! And this suggests another opening for our machine—a sort of cab to ply for hire in the streets; the driver pedalling away behind, while his fare sits in dignified ease and watches the gay panorama of the streets.

"Nothing more feasible," cries an enthusiast. "Give us only asphalt-covered roads, and we will put these vehicles on the streets to flit about by day like midges and at night like a swarm of fire-flies."

As for the question of applied power, such as electricity, that lies altogether in the future. The thing is possible, but a man's own muscular power—a potential force of which he rarely makes the use he might—seems at once the most natural and economical, and the makers of these machines are doing their best to ensure the most effective application of this power. The most important question is whether both the big wheels shall be driven or only one. To the casual observer it seems that if only one wheel be driven the machine must go round and round as on a pivot, like a boat with all the oars on one side. But in practice this is not so. The loose wheel somehow jogs along and keeps up with its fellow, and a touch at the helm every now and then keeps the craft from broaching to, while in point of simplicity and economy in first outlay the single drivers have it hollow. For your double-driving involves a more or less complicated arrangement for differentiating the speed of either wheel in turning, as if you have both wheels fixed rigidly to the axle your machine is like a railway-train, always in the same fix, really incapable of turning a curve, and must be dragged round by main force.

Then, when you have settled this point of single or double driving, you are puzzled among the many methods of conveying motion from pedals to axle, between the chains, the bands, the cogs which in

turn assert their claims and depreciate their rivals. Chains stretch, bands slip as well as stretch, and cogs snap off with fatal facility. Then there are men who tell you—and not the least eloquent of the tribe—that pedals are a mistake altogether, and that levers are the only permissible things to use. And you get bewildered with the multitude of counsellors and turn in despair to the simple model of ancient days, the backbone like a weaver's beam, a couple of cart-wheels behind and a rather larger one in front, that was driven with a primitive pair of pedals.

Again, when a choice has been made of the model, the question arises where to put it. Thus there is the barrow difficulty in the West as well as in the East. The costermonger finds it easier to house himself than the vehicle by which he gets his living, and generally has to take its wheels off before he can introduce it to his humble roof, and in the same way the tricyclist must take his delicate machine to pieces before he can get it through any ordinary doorway. To meet this, we have telescopic and folding tricycles, but a doubt remains whether these have the strength and staunchness of the undivided ones. When you have got over this, there will still be the burning question as to whether the little wheel is to lead or to trail—in other words, between front and rear steering. Or you may have side steering, as in a useful machine that has the great advantage of being convertible by an extra wheel into a staunch and easy-going sociable. And the sociable brings to mind that ladies have a good deal to say on this matter, and in both single and double harness are coming to the front as riders.

But, after all, the show of machines is a fine one—that is, allowing for the awkward place in which they are shown. Another year, no doubt, we shall see them all on one floor, with means of giving them a trial canter now and then. But even here, in this dingy amphitheatre, the bright steel and shining plate, the grace of lightness combined with strength, the beauty of mechanical fitness and perfection, strike with pleasant harmony on the senses. And what a prospect opens out before the possessor of one of these elegant machines! The whole country is open to him to pick and choose from, and England, in its nooks and corners, and pleasant haunts, and sweet villages, and lonely battle-fields, lies awaiting his inspection—a sealed book to most,

for who, with ever so much good will, can really see much of his native land unless in some such way as this? And here you have all that is pleasant in the pilgrimage without its burdens. If the hill Difficulty tasks the lungs and limbs, there is also the delicate plain and the meadow bordered with lilies, and the Delectable Mountains in the distance—which are surely the South Downs—and the Land of Beulah, which good cyclists say is not far from Ripley in Surrey.

But to turn out into the streets again, everything seems changed in the last hour or two, after rambling among the airy vehicles of the future. Inexpressibly heavy and clumsy appear the cabs; the omnibuses have the air of broad-wheeled wagons; even that well-appointed carriage, with its glossy horses, has a gross and clumsy appearance. Is it possible that such enormous weights are dragged about by these huge iron-shod animals, with such a clatter upon the smooth wooden pavement, and all to take about an old lady?

Our Coventry friend may well groan over all this waste of power, and really it takes some time before our eyes can again regard all this clumsy wheel-work with equanimity.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III. CHAPTER II. A PEAL OF BELLS.

HAVE the birds and the bells gone mad this glorious day?

Ever since early morning the chimes of St. Mary's tower have been making merry, now ringing peal after peal, now crashing all together as though they had gone crazy with joy. Above them is a perfectly cloudless dome of blue; that sight so rare in England, that, when it does gladden our eyes, we are all ready to turn sun-worshippers. Below, in the trees that stud the churchyard and flock the meadows, the birds are holding high carnival.

Spring is so rich in store of buds and tiny leaves but half unfolded, that she is like a mother glorying in the sight of many fair children.

The feathered banners of the ferns are unfolding; the white fluffy umbels of the mountain-ash make all the air beneath their flickering shadows fragrant.

The dykes gleam like silver in the sun-

shine, and from amid the tangle of greenery round about their treacherous edges, the blue eyes of the speedwell begin to look forth, while the white stars of the stelarium gem the hedgerows, and the daisies are scattered broadcast everywhere.

So bright is the dawn of this fair day, that of its very brightness is born a soft amethyst-tinted haze, that floats among the groves of tapering masts in the harbour, and veils the coast that is set thick with wharves and storehouses for merchandise.

The vane upon the town-hall in the old market-place blinks and sparkles as blindingly as on that morning fourteen years ago when first we caught its gleaming; and swallows dip and fly, circling in a sea of blue with joyous piercing cry now as then.

Only—to-day is Sunday: there is a quiet hush upon the town of Becklington, and the grasping miller's windmill keeps its long arms still.

And St. Mary's bells, pealing and crashing, have it all their own way, flinging the echo of their jubilant voices far out across the sea, which, where the veil of mist breaks, shows like a blue-green garment, bright with a thousand jewels.

All the workaday world being to-day restful as to hands, people have the more leisure to wag their tongues, and on every tongue is the story of the young heir, Ralph Stirling of Dale End, he whom men deemed dead, for whom women wept; he who, given back from the depths of the hungry sea, has come to claim his own, and to take up his abode in their midst.

A sudden spirit of religious fervour was making itself manifest in Becklington this glorious Sabbath morning. In truth, Cuthbert Deane would have had but little fault to find with the flock over which he was shepherd if such zeal were the rule, instead of the exception; if every man and woman who passed through the fair flowery meadows that day had been going thus eagerly to the sanctuary to praise and pray, instead of to gape and gaze at the young squire. But, while human nature exists, curiosity will ever be one of its strongest springs of action.

There was no manner of fear of anyone being late for morning-prayer on the present occasion. In fact the humbler portion of the congregation were scattered about St. Mary's churchyard, and hanging around the gateway, long before the clock pointed to the hour for service.

Amos Callender and his wife Bess—the

latter in a bonnet of marvellous smartness, tied with excruciating tightness under the chin—Farmer Dale and Nancy, with stalwart sons of whom they did well to be proud; Jeremy Bindwhistle and his spouse, in great request by virtue of their position at the Dale; and—oh, wonder of wonders!—Jake, dressed as he might be supposed to appear when sunning himself in the smiles of Widow Green—Jake, for once a deserter from the chapel—Jake, “wi’ his heart i’ his mouth,” as he explained to the farmer in an audible aside, and evidently foredoomed to distinguish himself in the hymn-singing by-and-by as a relief to what he called the “joy within”—all these, gravitating towards each other naturally by the force of habitual companionship, formed a group near the mighty yew-tree half-way up the churchyard.

“When you come to think on ’t, Jonah’s nothin’ to set agen Maister Ralph this day,” said Jake. “He wur but kep’ handy i’ the whale’s belly—which is, I reckon, a pleasant and comfortable place compared to an open boat in a stormy sea, and never an oar to grapple wi’—while as for t’ young squire—why, I tell yo’ what it is: I feel loike one as is called upon to see one resurrected.”

“I hope yon dratted ghost up at our place won’t resurrect itsel’, to greet t’ young squoire, anyway,” said Jeremy, with an uneasy glance at the graves with which he was surrounded.

“No fear, lad,” replied the farmer stoutly. “Yon chap got tired o’ walking long enoo’ sin’. Whoy, he’s never been ketched soight on sin’ Squire Geoffrey died, thee knows.”

“Are yo’ sure as ever he wur ketched sight on?” put in Amos Callender. “Happen ’twas just a bit foo ye all wur that time, and tuk a gatepost for a boggart.”

The tanner’s incredulity in the matter of the ghost was an old sore, and hot words might have been uttered, but that at that moment a carriage drove up to the church-gates, and eyes stared and tongues were silenced for the nonce.

Ralph was accompanied by Sir Denby and Lady Boscawen. Pretty Ethel was married a year back, or she too doubtless would have been beside her old companion. My lady looked what Bess described as “upsetted-like.” Her motherly heart was full. Her thoughts were with that other mother upon whose grave the sun was shining. Sir Denby betrayed an inclination to purse up his mouth for a whistle, and would have been glad to have given

vent to his feelings by clapping Ralph upon the back at intervals. This being impossible, he looked at once as happy and as ill at ease as most true Britons do when their feelings are a good deal wrought upon, and they find themselves in a conspicuous position.

The fourth occupant of the carriage was Anthony Geddes, that old and faithful retainer of the house of Stirling, who had followed its fortunes from bright days to dark days, and from dark to bright. His lint-white locks fell back from his eager radiant face; his back was bowed, as though with much bending over ledgers and tenants' records. His heart was full of thoughts of the boy Davey, full of regret and longing in that Davey was far away, instead of being here beside his master's darling son in this the hour of his return.

Crash! clang! crash! went the bells. Heads were bared in greeting to the wanderer returned—the dead alive.

Ralph could scarce make his way along the path to the church door for hands held out that must be met and clasped. Little Jake, active on his spindle pins, came to the fore like a man, and Master Ralph's "Ah, Jake, is that you?" fell like music on his ears. The farmer became gruff and husky with emotion, and Nancy well-nigh wept as the young squire greeted both as old friends.

"He ain't forgot one on us," said Amos in triumphant glee; "but Lord above! ain't he changed, and ain't he now the very spit and fashion o' the father before him? When he gev' a bit o' a smile and caught me by t' hand, I could ha' thought to see t' ould squire back again. His father's own son, lads—his father's own son!"

Those near murmured an assent, and Bess wiped her eyes that she might see the clearer.

Only late the night before had Ralph arrived at his desolate home, there to be greeted by poor old Anthony—a greeting more of tears than smiles—there to find Gaylad standing by the well-known door, almost blind, yet "out of himself," as the butler put it, with joy at his young master's return. Then Cuthbert Deane led Ralph into the silent house, led him to where Alicia stood waiting to give him hearty welcome. It was a strange and desolate home-coming, though it had been made the best of. Nurse Prettyman threw her arms about her nursling's neck, and broke

into tears of mingled joy and grief; and there was the empty chair, the vacant place of which the first sight is, to any of us, as the stab of a knife that cuts right to the core of our hearts, while ringing in our ears is the doom pronounced of old on all that are mortal, "the place that knew him shall know him no more."

After that long night, during which thoughts and reminiscences of those whose voices should never more fall upon his ear, jostled one another in his busy brain, the sunshine laden with the music of the sweet bell voices, the hearty grasping hands, the smiles of welcome, the words of happy greeting, seemed a strange new world about Ralph Stirling. His cheek was pale; his lips set in firm lines that told of feelings held in repression, yet swelling in his breast. He knew that the kindly feeling poured out upon him in such generous measure to-day was not all his own due; but was given to him as the son of the man who had been well-beloved among his fellows, high and low, rich and poor—the man whose tender, genuine nature, whose ready sympathy with sorrow, whose pity for the suffering and the sad, had been as cords that drew men's hearts whether they would or no.

Cuthbert Deane was not one to whom people were apt to lend an inattentive ear. People who are very much in earnest seldom meet with lukewarmness in others, for earnestness is of all things most catching. But to-day the vicar addressed a gathering of men and women, whose ears were more or less deaf in consequence of their eyes being for ever drawn to the young squire's reverently bent head—being, in a word, focussed upon the Dale End pew. Calmly conscious of and amused by this state of affairs, somewhat full at heart himself too, if truth must be told, Cuthbert Deane cut his morning's discourse rather short, and thoroughly enjoyed the way in which Jake flung himself into the spirit of the concluding hymn.

"No wonder the chapel counts Jake as one of its brightest ornaments," thought the vicar, a little smile lurking under his beard, for, with heart and voice—and plenty of the latter—Jake led the rest, casting the rustic choir completely into the shade, and serenely unconscious of the stony glances bestowed upon him by the leader of that musical body—led off "as if he was born to 't," as that indignant potentate remarked afterwards.

"And yo' did sing, too, Jake, and no

mistake about it," said the farmer with a delighted chuckle, as the two came out together when the service was over.

"What else did I coom for?" retorted Jake. "'Whatever thy hand finds to do, do it wi' all thy moight,' says t' Book, and when I praise the Lord, I put a' my soul into 't."

"Ay, that dost thou," said the farmer; "an' a' thy lungs too. It's a marvel, Jake, as such a weazeny mon as thee can mak' so much noise."

"May be," said Jake, "may be; I'm gifted that way, I know; but I strive to be on my guard against undue upliftins. Them as is gifted walks among pitfaas and quagmires, neighbour, and should be wary lest spiritooal pride step in and bring them to a sorry end."

The farmer, in a high state of delight, nudged Nancy with his elbow, and went near to set her off laughing.

But Jake, serenely unconscious of satire, with his peaky nose uplifted, and his weazen face one sweet smirk of self-content, made his way among the crowd, comparing in his mind—most unfavourably to the former—church and chapel, orthodoxy and dissent.

This time, Sir Denby and his spouse drove off alone, old Anthony toddled away with Mrs. Geddes, who was gorgeously attired in honour of the festive character of the occasion, and Ralph lingered with the vicar and Alicia.

"I have not seen Mrs. Devenant and Hilda," he said, looking somewhat wistfully round the little groups that still lingered here and there.

A soft flush rose in Alicia's cheek. Her dislike to the mistress of the White House had not dwindled and pined, but rather had gathered, and was still gathering, strength.

Perhaps her husband wished to anticipate what she might say. At all events he spoke promptly in answer to Ralph's question.

"Mrs. Devenant is a great invalid, though many say her illness is more of the mind than of the body."

Ralph looked grave. He had heard the story of his father's death. He was wondering if the shock of it had been detrimental to the woman who had come nobly forward in the hour of need, proving herself a friend indeed.

"And—Hilda?" he asked, after a short silence.

"Is her mother's shadow," said the vicar.

"Her devotion, her entire forgetfulness of self are beautiful things to see. She seems to live only in and for her mother's life."

At the vicarage gate the three lingered.

"Will you not come in, Ralph?" said Alicia; and her voice had a little tremble in it, that made Ralph's grave dark eyes look at her questioningly.

"No, thanks," he said; "not now—but I will be with you this evening."

"Cuthbert," said the vicar's wife as they watched the tall, lithe figure pass along the road beneath the grey shadows of the trees, "where do you think Ralph is going?"

"I don't think—I know," said the vicar. "He is going to the White House. My darling, what is it?"

"Perhaps some one is walking over my grave!" answered Alicia, who had paled suddenly, but was smiling up at her husband, as if to deride her own weakness.

Meanwhile, Ralph betook himself up the road along which, one terrible night in the far-off past, the shadow of a woman had chased the shadow of a man—along which Hester Devenant had tracked her husband Gabriel. When he reached the gates of the White House, Ralph stopped a moment, brought to a halt by the childish memories that came upon him like a flood.

How often had he watched for Davey, peering through those bars—Davey, with gentle, loving, and wistful face, and a tiny boat, carved out of white wood, nestling in his coat pocket! How often had he watched that dear father, whom his eyes should never more behold in life, driving in as he came home from the bank, while Jeremy, holding the gate open, looked as though he thought he was going through immense exertion on behalf of the family!

There was the nursery window, where he used to lie curled up in the window-seat, with the yellow pup upon his lap, and Nurse Prettyman holding forth on the enormity of little people not wanting to go to bed in due and proper time.

What a long lifetime seemed to lie between that time and now!

The lilac's lavender pyramids were scenting the air; the laburnum was shaking out its yellow locks to the balmy breeze, so balmy and soft that its touch was a caress to every flower it blew upon. The year's first butterflies fluttered about in a timid uncertain way, as though life to them were almost bewildering in its brightness and delight, from flower to tree, and from tree to flower. The river—could it be the

same that rushed and twirled so madly but a while ago!—stole along, whispering among the flowers and reeds, and kissing the golden king-cups as it passed.

As Ralph took his way up the well-remembered path, as he neared the old porch, with its wealth of clematis, and roses peeping here and there, a woman's voice, exquisitely sweet and clear, yet holding tears in its full soft tones, sang a stave of an old, old song.

"Love is not a feeling to pass away
Like the balmy breath of a summer's day,
It is not—it cannot be—laid aside,
It is not a thing to forget—or hide."

As both song and singer came nearer to the sun-warmed outer world, Ralph stood waiting, his eyes fixed on the place where he knew she must come into view, his dark head bared, a smile softening the lines of his lips.

There she stood at last, just under the tangle of the clematis, a woman, in all the exquisite beauty of maturity.

She wore a simple black dress whose sweeping lines showed the supple grace of her slender form. About her throat was a broad ribbon, the colour of the lilac blossoms. Her brown locks, the tint of the ripened nuts in autumn, rippled backwards from her open brow. Her eyes, blue as the speedwells that mirrored themselves in the dykes, were sweet and pure, yet grave beyond her years. In truth, a certain sadness was to be read in all her lovely face, while her smile was that of one who carries the cross God has sent to be borne, but carries it with a brave heart and a loving spirit of trust and submission.

"Are you Hilda?" said Ralph, watching her as though she were some new wonder of that beautiful day of promise and plenty.

"Am I so changed?" she answered, giving question for question.

Then her hand, white and delicate, yet with no suggestion of feeble uselessness in its frank pressure, was laid in his, her grave eyes read his face, as his hers.

"You, too, are changed, Master Ralph," she said.

"The old name," he answered, smiling, "and the old song too? I remember hearing you sing that at the vicarage long ago."

"It was Miss Alicia taught it to me—longer ago still—when I was ever such a little child. I used to sing it to my father."

Unconsciously both seemed loth to leave the sunny scented garden; both seemed for the time being absolutely content.

"This is all very strange about you," said Hilda earnestly; "it is like a story. I meant to have gone down to St. Mary's this morning, and then I should have seen you with the rest; but mother wasn't so well—I could not leave her."

"I came to see your mother."

"Yes, of course; I knew that as soon as I saw you. I am glad you have come."

"I missed her—and you, among the rest; and then I asked Mrs. Deane."

"Mother is never quite well now, and I am always with her. Will you come in, Master Ralph?"

"Am I always to be called that?" he said, stepping under the clematis, and following Hilda across the hall.

"I like it," she said with a gentle imperiousness delightful to hear.

At the door of the room Hilda stopped a moment, turning a strange look back at her companion. It was a look that seemed to make some trouble that was hers, his as well; a look that pleaded with him to be gentle to a sick and unreasonable woman.

"Mother," said Hilda, opening the door, "here is Master Ralph come to see you."

Mrs. Devenant, or something that looked like the shadow or wraith of the Hester Devenant we have known, looked up as her daughter spoke—looked beyond Hilda, to where, framed in the open doorway, stood the figure of Ralph Stirling. As she looked, Mrs. Devenant's face took the likeness of a statue; her eyes, staring and straining, seemed the only life left where all else was stone.

Ralph, after one moment's hesitation, hurried to her side, took her hand, bent over her with tenderest concern.

"I came to you at once," he said. "I knew you were with my dear father when he died. I have heard the story of it all. Do you wonder I could not keep away?"

He held the cold hand in his own, chafing it tenderly. Hilda, her eyes full of fear, knelt by her mother's side.

"It is my fault," she said with a little sigh of penitence; "I should not have brought you to her unawares. I did not think—I was too hasty. Mother, mother, what is it, dear?"

Their relative positions seemed strangely

reversed. Hilda spoke as might a loving anxious mother to a suffering child.

Still Hester's eyes, wide and full of some unspeakable horror, grew to the manly pitiful face of the man who watched her with such pained solicitude. Still her features were but as a mask, while a slight froth oozed from the set lips.

"Had I better leave you?" said Ralph, troubled.

Hilda made a sign of assent, and he was moving towards the door when Mrs. Devenant cried out in a strange strident voice, "Stay!" raising the hand he had dropped, as if to detain him.

A shudder passed over her; a moment she pressed her hands above her eyes, and then looked up at Ralph and smiled.

"I am better now," she said—"almost well. The day has been warm, and I was a little faint. It has passed off now. Come and sit beside me. Let me give you a more fitting greeting."

Hilda, drawing a deep breath of relief, pulled down the blind and shut out the early roses that were thrusting in their dainty perfumed heads; for the sun beat in hotly.

Before long, Ralph had renewed his acquaintance with the goblins on the mantel-shelf, and asked after his old and particular friend upon the stairs.

"Come and look at him!" said Hilda, laughing.

So they went. Mrs. Devenant leaned forward eagerly in her chair, grasping its arms convulsively, as she listened to their happy talk. She heard them find the elf in question; heard them come down the low broad stairway; heard Ralph ask if he might go and see the old haunts by the river; heard the soft rustle of Hilda's dress as the two passed into the garden.

Then Hester rose from her chair, crossed to the casement, and put aside the blind.

Side by side the two were standing by the whispering river.

Hilda had caught up her hat as she passed through the hall, but it swung idly in her hand. So warm was the sunny garden that it was not needed.

How fair she looked, with the little leaf-shadows touching her hair like fairy fingers!

Could this be Hilda? thought Ralph, looking, listening, wondering, with all his soul in his eyes.

He had left a child; he found a woman—a woman, too, who had felt and thought and suffered—a woman with "a face like a Benedictine"—a woman who, merging her life in that of another, living only for that other, had so trampled her sweet self under foot as to rise from that voluntary abasement a thing perfectly lovely, half divine!

Mere beauty may enslave a man's senses, mere youth and charm may catch his fancy, but it is the woman who has thought, and felt, and suffered who twines herself most closely about his heart.

These two looked at each other in a quiet amaze even while they spoke on common topics, recalling little incidents of Ralph's boyhood, speaking of Mrs. Devenant's broken health, of this or that, that anyone might have discussed. Each seemed saying to the other by some strange and subtle language that knew no words, yet that was as real as though possessing endless dictionaries of terms and meanings: "I have been looking for you always, and now—I have found you."

And Hester, watching, grew eager—full of passionate feeling. A hot flush burned on her cheek; her eyes shone and glistened with a cruel light; she beat her hands together in a softly restrained frenzy of joy, as the two, side by side, bending a little towards each other now and again, swaying apart only to draw near once more, passed out of sight, following the winding of the river.

"I was foiled," she muttered—"foiled! But it may be yet! Who knows?"

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PRICE TWOPENCE

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER I. THE LAST OF MISS THOROUGHUNG.

MR. PROSPER, with that kind of energy which was distinctively his own, had sent off his letter to Harry Annesley, with his postscript in it about his blighted matrimonial prospects, a letter easy to be written, before he had completed his grand epistle to Miss Thoroughbung. The epistle to Miss Thoroughbung was one requiring great consideration. It had to be studied in every word, and re-written again and again with the profoundest care. He was afraid that he might commit himself by an epithet. He dreaded even an adverb too much. He found that a full stop expressed his feelings too violently, and wrote the letter again, for the fifth time, because of the big initial which followed the full stop. The consequence of all this long delay was that Miss Thoroughbung had heard the news, through the brewery, before it reached her in its legitimate course. Mr. Prosper had written his postscript by accident, and, in writing it, had forgotten the intercourse between his brother-in-law's house and the Buntingford people. He had known well of the proposed marriage; but he was a man who could not think of two things at the same time, and thus had committed the blunder.

Perhaps it was better for him as it was; and the blow came to him with a rapidity which created less of suffering than might have followed the slower mode of proceeding which he had intended. He was actually making the fifth copy of the letter, rendered necessary by that violent full stop, when Matthew came to him and announced that Miss Thoroughbung was in

the drawing-room. "In the house!" ejaculated Mr. Prosper.

"She would come into the hall; and then where was I to put her?"

"Matthew Pike, you will not do for my service." This had been said about once every three months throughout the long course of years in which Matthew had lived with his master.

"Very well, sir. I am to take it for a month's warning, of course." Matthew understood well enough that this was merely an expression of his master's displeasure, and, being anxious for his master's welfare, knew that it was decorous that some decision should be come to at once as to Miss Thoroughbung, and that time should not be lost in his own little personal quarrel. "She is waiting, you know, sir, and she looks uncommon irascible. There is the other lady left outside in the carriage."

"Miss Tickle! Don't let her in, whatever you do. She is the worst. Oh, dear; oh, dear! Where are my coat and waistcoat; and my braces! And I haven't brushed my hair. And these slippers won't do. What business has she to come at this time of day, without saying a word to anybody!" Then Matthew went to work, and got his master into decent apparel, with as little delay as possible. "After all," said Mr. Prosper, "I don't think I'll see her. Why should I see her?"

"She knows you are at home, sir."

"Why does she know I'm at home? That's your fault. She oughtn't to know anything about it. Oh, dear; oh, dear; oh, dear!" These last ejaculations arose from his having just then remembered the nature of his postscript to Harry Annesley; and the engagement of Joe Thoroughbung to his niece. He made up his mind at the moment,—or thought that he had made up his mind,—that Harry Annesley should

not have a shilling as long as he lived. "I am quite out of breath. I cannot see her yet. Go and offer the lady cake and wine; and tell her that you had found me very much indisposed. I think you will have to tell her that I am not well enough to receive her to-day."

"Get it over, sir, and have done with it."

"It's all very well to say have done with it! I shall never have done with it. Because you have let her in to-day, she'll think that she can come always. Good Lord! There she is on the stairs! Pick up my slippers." Then the door was opened, and Miss Thoroughbung herself entered the room. It was an upstairs chamber, known as Mr. Prosper's own; and from it was the door into his bedroom. How Miss Thoroughbung had learned her way to it he never could guess. But she had come up the stairs, as though she had been acquainted with all the intricacies of the house from her childhood.

"Mr. Prosper," she said, "I hope I see you quite well this morning;—and that I have not disturbed you at your toilet." That she had done so was evident, from the fact that Matthew, with the dressing-gown and slippers, was seen disappearing into the bedroom.

"I am not very well, thank you," said Mr. Prosper, rising from his chair, and offering her his hand, with the coldest possible salutation.

"I am sorry for that—very. I hope it is not your indisposition which has prevented you from coming to see me. I have been expecting you every day since Soames wrote his last letter. But it's no use pretending any longer. Oh, Peter, Peter!" This use of his christian-name struck him absolutely dumb,—so that he was unable to utter a syllable. He should, first of all, have told her that any excuse she had before for calling him by his christian-name, was now at an end. But there was no opening for speech such as that. "Well," she continued, "have you got nothing to say to me? You can write flippant letters to other people, and turn me into ridicule glibly enough."

"I have never done so."

"Did you not write to Joe Thoroughbung, and tell him you had given up all thoughts of having me?"

"Joe!" he exclaimed. His very surprise did not permit him to go further, at the moment, than this utterance of the young man's christian-name.

"Yes, Joe;—Joe Thoroughbung, my nephew, and yours that is to be. Did you not write and tell him that everything was over?"

"I never wrote to young Mr. Thoroughbung in my life. I should not have dreamed of such a correspondence on such a subject."

"Well; he says you did. Or, if you didn't write to Joe himself, you wrote to somebody."

"I may have written to somebody, certainly."

"And told them that you didn't mean to have anything further to say to me?" That traitor Harry had now committed a sin worse than knocking a man down in the middle of the night, and leaving him bleeding, speechless, and motionless; worse than telling a lie about it; worse even than declining to listen to sermons read by his uncle. Harry had committed such a sin that no shilling of allowance should evermore be paid to him. Even at this moment there went through Mr. Prosper's brain an idea that there might be some unmarried female in England besides Miss Puffle and Miss Thoroughbung. "Peter Prosper, why don't you answer like a man, and tell me the honest truth?" He had never before been called Peter Prosper in his whole life.

"Perhaps you had better let me make a communication by letter," he said. At that very moment the all but completed epistle was lying on the table before him, where even her eyes might reach it. In the flurry of the moment he covered it up.

"Perhaps that is the letter which has taken you so long to write," she said.

"It is the letter."

"Then hand it me over, and save yourself the penny stamp." In his confusion he gave her the letter, and threw himself down on the sofa while she read it. "You have been very careful in choosing your language, Mr. Prosper. 'It will be expedient that I should make known to you the entire truth.' Certainly, Mr. Prosper, certainly. The entire truth is the best thing,—next to entire beer, my brother would say." "The horrid vulgar woman!" Mr. Prosper ejaculated to himself. "'There seems to have been a complete misunderstanding with regard to that amiable lady, Miss Tickle.' No misunderstanding at all. You said you liked her, and I supposed you did. And when I had been living for twenty years with a female companion, who hasn't sixpence in the world to buy a rag with,

but what she gets from me, was it to be expected that I should turn her out for any man?"

"An annuity might have been arranged, Miss Thoroughbung."

"Bother an annuity! That's all you think about feelings! Was she to go and live alone and desolate, because you wanted some one to nurse you? And then those wretched ponies. I tell you, Peter Prosper, that let me marry whom I will, I mean to drive a pair of ponies, and am able to do so out of my own money. Ponies indeed! It's an excuse. Your heart has failed you. You've come to know a woman of spirit, and now you're afraid that she'll be too much for you. I shall keep this letter, though it has not been sent."

"You can do as you please about that, Miss Thoroughbung."

"Oh yes; of course I shall keep it, and shall give it to Messrs. Soames and Simpson. They are most gentlemanlike men, and will be shocked at such conduct as this from the Squire of Buston. The letter will be published in the newspapers, of course. It will be very painful to me, no doubt; but I shall owe it to my sex to punish you. When all the county are talking of your conduct to a lady, and saying that no man could have done it, let alone no gentleman, then you will feel it. Miss Tickle! And a pair of ponies! You expected to get my money and nothing to give for it. Oh, you mean man!"

She must have been aware that every word she spoke was a dagger. There was a careful analysis of his peculiar character displayed in every word of reproach which she uttered. Nothing could have wounded him more than the comparison between himself and Soames and Simpson. They were gentlemen! "The vulgarest men in all Buntingford!" he declared to himself, and always ready for any sharp practice. Whereas he was no man, Miss Thoroughbung said; a mean creature, altogether unworthy to be regarded as a gentleman. He knew himself to be Mr. Prosper of Buston Hall, with centuries of Prospers for his ancestors; whereas Soames was the son of a tax-gatherer; and Simpson had come down from London, as a clerk from a solicitor's office in the City. And yet it was true that people would talk of him as did Miss Thoroughbung! His cruelty would be in every lady's mouth. And then his stinginess about the ponies would be the gossip of the county for twelve months. And, as he found out what Miss Thorough-

bung was, the disgrace of even having wished to marry her loomed terribly large before him.

But there was a twinkle of jest in the lady's eyes all the while, which he did not perceive, and which, had he perceived it, he could not have understood. Her anger was but simulated wrath. She, too, had thought that it might be well, under circumstances, if she were to marry Mr. Prosper; but had quite understood that those circumstances might not be forthcoming. "I don't think it will do at all, my dear," she had said to Miss Tickle. "Of course an old bachelor like that won't want to have you."

"I beg you won't think of me for a moment," Miss Tickle had answered with solemnity.

"Bother! Why can't you tell the truth? I'm not going to throw you over, and of course you'd be just nowhere if I did. I sha'n't break my heart for Mr. Prosper. I know I should be an old fool if I were to marry him; and he is more of an old fool for wanting to marry me. But I did think he wouldn't cut up so rough about the ponies." And then, when no answer came to the last letter from Soames and Simpson, and the tidings reached her, round from the brewery, that Mr. Prosper intended to be off, she was not in the least surprised. But the information, she thought, had come to her in an unworthy manner. So she determined to punish the gentleman, and went out to Buston Hall and called him Peter Prosper. We may doubt, however, whether she had ever realised how terribly her scourges would wale him.

"And to think that you would let it come round to me in that way, through the young people,—writing about it just as a joke."

"I never wrote about it like a joke," said Mr. Prosper, almost crying.

"I remember now. It was to your nephew; and of course everybody at the rectory saw it. Of course they were all laughing at you." There was one thing now written in the book of fates, and sealed as certainly as the crack of doom. No shilling of allowance should ever be paid to Harry Annesley. He would go abroad. He said so to himself as he thought of this, and said also that, if he could find a healthy young woman anywhere, he would marry her, sacrificing every idea of his own happiness to his desire of revenge upon his nephew. This, however, was only the

passionate feeling of the moment. Matrimony had become altogether so distasteful to him, since he had become intimately acquainted with Miss Thoroughbung, as to make any release in that manner quite impossible to him. "Do you propose to make me any amends?" asked Miss Thoroughbung.

"Money?" said he.

"Yes; money! Why shouldn't you pay me money? I should like to keep three ponies, and to have Miss Tickle's sister to come and live with me."

"I do not know whether you are in earnest, Miss Thoroughbung."

"Quite in earnest, Peter Prosper. But perhaps I had better leave that matter in the hands of Soames and Simpson. Very gentlemanlike men, and they'll be sure to let you know how much you ought to pay. Ten thousand pounds wouldn't be too much, considering the distress to my wounded feelings." Here Miss Thoroughbung put her handkerchief up to her eyes.

There was nothing that he could say. Whether she were laughing at him, as he thought to be most probable, or whether there was some grain of truth in the demand which she made, he found it equally impossible to make any reply. There was nothing that he could say; nor could he absolutely turn her out of the room. But after ten minutes' further continuation of these amenities, during which it did at last come home to his brain that she was merely laughing at him, he began to think that he might possibly escape, and leave her there in possession of his chamber.

"If you will excuse me, Miss Thoroughbung, I will retire," he said, rising from the sofa.

"Regularly chaffed out of your own den," she said, laughing.

"I do not like this interchange of wit on subjects that are so serious."

"Interchange! There is very little interchange, according to my idea. You haven't said anything witty. What an idea of interchange the man has."

"At any rate I will escape from your rudeness."

"Now, Peter Prosper, before you go let me ask you one question. Which of the two has been the rudest to the other? You have come and asked me to marry you, and have evidently wished to back out of it from the moment in which you found that I had ideas of my own about money. And now you call me rude, because I have my little revenge. I have called you Peter

Prosper, and you can't stand it. You haven't spirit enough to call me Matty Thoroughbung in reply. But good-bye, Mr. Prosper,—for I never will call you Peter again. As to what I said to you about money, that, of course, is all bosh. I'll pay Soames's bill, and will never trouble you. There's your letter, which, however, would be of no use because it is not signed. A very stupid letter it is. If you want to write naturally you should never copy a letter. Good-bye, Mr. Prosper,—Peter that never shall be." Then she got up and walked out of the room.

Mr. Prosper, when he was left alone, remained for a while nearly paralysed. That he should have ever entertained the idea of making that woman his wife! Such was his first thought. Then he reflected that he had, in truth, escaped from her more easily than he had hoped, and that she had certainly displayed some good qualities, in spite of her vulgarity and impudence. She did not, at any rate, intend to trouble him any further. He would never again hear himself called Peter by that terribly loud voice. But his anger became very fierce against the whole family at the rectory. They had ventured to laugh at him, and he could understand that, in their eyes, he had become very ridiculous. He could see it all,—the manner in which they had made fun of him, and had been jocose over his intended marriage. He certainly had not intended to be funny in their eyes. But, while he had been exercising the duty of a stern master over them, and had been aware of his own extreme generosity in his efforts to forgive his nephew, that very nephew had been laughing at him, in conjunction with the nephew of her whom he had intended to make his wife! Not a shilling, again, should ever be allowed to Harry Annesley. If it could be so arranged, by any change of circumstances, he might even yet become the father of a family of his own.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

YORKSHIRE PART II.

GRAND is the sight of Richmond Castle enthroned in glorious light, as Turner painted it, and as it sometimes reveals itself to ordinary eyes—the castle with the subject town about it and the towers of church and priory, the river foaming below. No mere baron's hold is this, or strong place of

aspiring knight, but a semi-royal fortress, built for the conqueror's kinsman, the Red Alan of Bretagne. The lordly keep was built, indeed, by his successor, Duke Conan; a noble tower hardly touched by time, as perfect in its way as the White Tower of London, with a grand view from the summit. Conan's daughter and heiress was Constance, the Cassandra-like mother of Prince Arthur in Shakespeare's King John, and when the English king in the play declares

We will heal up all,
For we'll create young Arthur Duke of Bretagne
And Earl of Richmond,

he was only giving the boy what was already his by right of lineage. Till the reign of Richard the Second the earldom remained in the house of Bretagne, but was intermittently confiscated and restored as suited the policy of the English kings. Great vassals gathered about the castle—constables and seneschals, themselves the founders of families of high degree. In the great banqueting-hall, that still remains, hung the banners of Scolland, Marmion, and Fitzhugh—names all of note in the chronicles of mediæval Yorkshire. Through John of Gaunt the earldom came to the house of Lancaster, and so to Henry Tudor, who, when he won the crown, struck perhaps by some similarity in the site, bestowed the name upon his manor at Shene, in Surrey—and perhaps the younger Richmond, with its girdle of woods and pastures, with the Thames winding below, may worthily compare with its northern prototype.

Richmond Castle still goes with the title, raised in rank, but no longer with its rich possessions, for the present duke, although abundantly endowed elsewhere, holds only the half-dozen acres of land in Richmondshire, that lie within the compass of the castle walls. And now the old keep is a storehouse for the militia of the district.

As for the priory, it is notable chiefly in connection with the ancient ballad of The Felon Sowe of Richmond, with its refrain that has a pleasant swing about it, that one can fancy ringing among the smoky oaken rafters of the old hall, while the black-jack went round and the beards wagged merrily:

Raph of Rokeby with full goodwill,
The fryers of Richmond gave her till
Fryer Middleton by his name,
He was sent to fetch her hame.

A pleasant walk must the friars have had—to fetch the bacon that was to be—

along Gillingbeck and past Gilling, the ancient seat of the Anglo-Saxon Earls of Richmond. A little to the right is Scotch-corner—for ages the meeting-point of the great highways—centuries after to form a point where mail-coaches met, and then to be almost forgotten of mankind till the age of the bicycle; but to the friar the name would only bring memories of border raids. Past the even then ruined towers of Ravensworth and the seat of the Saxon Bodins; and then striking into the vale of Greta, among scenery to be made famous later on by the genius of Scott, we come to "Mortham's deeper glen," the home of the good old race of Rokeby.

Of the particular Raph who gave the sow to the friars, history is silent, but one of the line of Rokeby at least had been famous—the Sir Thomas the sheriff, who with the posse of the county met and vanquished old Northumberland, and sent his grey head to King Henry the Fourth. More skilful courtiers would have risen to fame and rank on the strength of such an exploit, but the sturdy Yorkshire knight, it seems, only got fined for doing execution on the earl without a warrant. And so in homely state, neither richer nor poorer, lived the knights of Mortham; and a hearty welcome no doubt had the friar, with a copious draught from the black-jack and a huge slice of the pasty to fortify him for his attack on the felon sow. The poem recites with some humour the fortunes of the day—how the sow takes refuge in a kiln and is secured by a halter, but turns the tables on her captors and drives them in full rout:

They fled away by Watling-street,
They had no succour but their feet.

The sow makes a beeline back to Mortham, where her old master, seeing the fierce aspect of the sow and the rope about its neck, concludes that there has been debate, in which the sow has had a share.

Some new things shall we hear
Of her and Middleton the Friar.

The friar, indeed, is so enraged at his defeat that he is ready to fly at his superior and all the rest of the convent. But these next day engage two men of war, one of them a Crusader, to go and capture the sow, which finally succumbs to their prowess, and is brought home in the form of bacon to the convent, whereupon

They sang merrily To Deum,
The fryers every one.

There are no Rokebys nowadays at Mortham Tower, which is a good specimen of the border peel—for we are still in the track of the Scotch raiders—and is now a farm-house. The last of the Rokebys, a loyal, thrifless cavalier, sold the estate to the Robinsons, one of whom in the eighteenth century—Bishop of Armagh—was created Baron Rokeby. But long Tom Robinson, who is often mentioned in the gossiping memoirs of the period, sold the property to the Morriss, who are now the owners of Rokeby Hall.

Here we are close to Greta Bridge, where Nickleby once alighted from the coach for Dotheboys' Hall, and a short walk brings us to Bowes and its one gaunt dreary street of grey-stone houses, most of them once schools of the cheap Yorkshire type—schools which, it is said, the fame of Mr. Squeers brought to gradual extinction. A tower close by Bowes, of no great interest as a ruin, is said to have been built by Alan of Bretagne, and the ruins of Egglestone Priory, although scanty in themselves, point the way to a beautiful glen—Thorsgill, that Scott assigns to Titania for a bower. There is a real charm, too, in Brignall, with its lonely church lying in the very lap of the hills.

O Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta's woods are green!

But in this corner of Yorkshire the country is wild and desolate, except for the dales and gills where the rivers make their gardens in the wilderness; here and there are lead mines scattered among the hills with miners' villages and rough unpolished inhabitants. So hie we back to Richmond and civilisation; and then a pleasant walk down the banks of Swale to Easby, a pretty little ruin of a Premonstratensian abbey, founded by the constable of Richmond Castle, and afterwards endowed by the Scropes of Castle Bolton. Lower down is Catterick, with its remains of a Roman station, the outline still visible, and with other memorials in camps and tumuli of the unrecorded battles and slaughters of the past. And yet not all unrecorded, for here surely was fought the great battle of Cattraeth, described by the Welsh bard:

The heroes marched to Cattraeth, loquacious was
the host;
Blue mead was their liquor, and it proved their
ruin.

This it is generally agreed was the decisive battle that gave the hated Saxons—all who came from over the North Sea

were Saxons to the North Britons—that gave the Saxons the land of Deivyr for their own. The last scene of the tragic combat was in the storming of the British stronghold where Richmond Castle now stands, crowded with the women, the children, and the cattle of the united tribes. It is curious to find their own bard reproaching the Britons with their drunkenness, and ascribing the loss of their dominion in England to that fatal vice. Only, if the gleemen on the other side could be heard, no doubt they would ascribe some of the credit of the victory to the copious draughts of ale and mead which their fair-haired heroes were in the habit of taking.

In Catterick parish is the chapelry of Bolton-on-Swale, in whose church is a monument to Henry Jenkins, born in the hamlet of Ellerton close by, who died in 1670, and is said to have survived to the hundred and sixty-ninth year of his age. If Jenkins was to be believed upon his oath, his claim to be the doyen of centenarians is pretty clearly established. At a trial at York Assizes, as to the right to some land, Jenkins swore to its condition a hundred and twenty years ago; and he related incidents of his youth which, if true, were convincing enough. He was employed, he said, as a boy to drive a cart with arrows to the army at Flodden Field, and he remembered Jorevaux Abbey in its palmy days, and had often taken messages to the abbot. Let us cling to our belief in Jenkins as an example of what mankind may hope to attain to in the way of length of days.

The traditions about Richmond Castle are rather of its early British than of its Norman occupants. Under the roots of the great tower, says the popular story, in a vast mysterious cavern, in which Arthur and his knights lie spell-bound in deep and dreamless slumber. There hangs the sword which hardly mortal strength can withdraw from its scabbard, there the belt or garter, and there the mystic horn, whose sound shall one day end the enchantment, and summon the people to the last great battle. On a certain night in the year a passage opens to the enchanted vault; but bold must be the wight, and careless of his life, who undertakes the adventure. One bold farmer is said to have found his way to the sleeping king, to have actually drawn the sword and severed the knot. Wherenpon the king and his knights turned half round,

as if in the act of waking, but next moment resumed their statue-like repose, while a mournful voice repeated :

"O woe betide that evil day
On which this witless wight was born,
Who drew the sword, the garter cut,
But never blew the bugle-horn."

The story, indeed, in various forms is common to the folk-lore of many nations, and the same tradition claims a local habitation at Sewing Shields, on the Roman walls, and at Tintagel. But Yorkshire has quite as much claim to Arthur as any other county of them all.

The pleasant dales of Richmondshire are notable for fine churches of a rich and ornate character, with stalls richly carved, and elaborate Easter sepulchres, with altar tombs of founders and benefactors, and finest windows, seen through tower-arches of good proportions. But at Bedale, which lies in our track from Richmond, the church tower is evidently built to serve the subsidiary purpose of a tower of defence or refuge. The castle of the FitzAlans was close by, their tombs are in the chancel ; but the pariah priest of the day would have his own tower to himself, so that when the alarm of Scotch raiders was given, like Robinson Crusoe he could draw up his ladder and feel himself snug and inaccessible. The piety of the Scots might be trusted so far, that they would not set fire to the church, although it might not restrain them from looting anything portable they could lay hands upon in church or parsonage.

From Bedale a railway, not very long completed, takes us up the pleasant Wensleydale, at the foot of which, with its pastures and green moors, lies Middleham, noted for its racing stables, with an imposing ruin, too, of the great castle of the Nevilles. Here the last of the barons, the great Warwick the King-maker, held Edward the Fourth in lax captivity for a while, till the king, hunting on the moors one day, rode off altogether, and made for Lancaster, whence the dogs of war were unloosed once more ; while Warwick, who seems to have been too generous an enemy for the times, lost the next turn of the game, and paid forfeit with his life at Barnet fight. The spoils went to the victors. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, got Middleham, and here he lived with Ann Neville his wife, whose hasty wooing is the subject of the first scene in Shakespeare's Richard the Third. Here was born their only son, Edward. If the chroniclers say

true, that Richard himself slew Edward, Prince of Wales, his wife's first husband, it is strange that he should have ventured to call his son by the same name. The boy died before Bosworth Field, and is buried at Sheriff Hutton, the site of another of the Neville Castles in Yorkshire, where there is a tomb to his memory.

Near Middleham we have Jorevaux Abbey, a Cistercian house, which had been almost levelled to the ground, and was so covered with mould and turf that the site was almost forgotten, and was used as a farm-yard, till one day the farmer espied what he thought to be a grindstone, lying half buried in the soil, and tried to get it up. He tried, and his men tried, and finally, a team of horses was yoked on, and still the grindstone remained immovable, and, perhaps, would have got the credit of being enchanted, but the noble owner of the estate coming by, had the stone dug about, and discovered that it was the lower part of a column of the ancient abbey church. Then the site was excavated and cleared, and the pavement of the church, in coloured tiles, and sundry monuments were discovered, in good preservation. The Prior of Jorevaux is introduced in the opening chapter of Ivanhoe—although the jovial, sporting monk of the novel gives a misleading idea of the Cistercians, then in the first zeal of their mission, much as if a future novelist of the twenty-fourth century were to depict a Wesleyan minister of our days hunting in pink and top-boots. The last prior, Adam Sedburgh, was hanged at Tyburn for denying the king's supremacy, and his signature is still to be read on the walls of his prison in the Tower of London.

Not far along the line is the little station of Redmire, from which Bolton Castle can easily be reached, interesting as a dwelling in transition, half fortress, half mansion-house. It was built probably by Richard Scrope, the archbishop who was decapitated, and built in the reign of Richard the Second, when Scrope was in high power and favour at Court. A grand but gloomy pile it is, in its isolation and decay. Here Mary of Scots spent two years of her troubled life. Only the most starch and stiff of the English gentry could be trusted to guard her. Others she conquered with a look or a gracious word. Here at Bolton she made a captive of one of her gaolers, a young man of family, by asking him to hold her sampler as she stitched busily

away by the flickering fire in the great hall. Even now we feel the glamour and charm of her wonderful personality, and it requires a very stern historian to deal harshly with her. Bolton was knocked to pieces in the Civil Wars, and has never since been made habitable. Colonel Chaytor held it for the king, and it was one of the last to surrender of the royal posts.

All along Wensleydale—it should be Uredale, or in French fashion Joreval, but has somehow been wrongly labelled—there are bits of charming scenery among the surrounding wilds, lovely glens here and there, and waterfalls for the seeking. At Aysgarth the river falls over a succession of limestone terraces, which, when the river is in full spate, afford a series of bold and tumultuous rapids, upon which looks down an ancient bow bridge, whose graceful lines atone for any steepness and narrowness that coachmen may complain of. And the railway presently brings us to the region of limestone mountains, with Ingleborough as the presiding summit—Ingleborough, the red fire from whose beacon sent its gleam right across Morecambe to the Irish Sea, among the Welsh hills, over the wild mountains of Cumbria, and about the romantic dales of Craven. The flat summit, a mile in compass, with ramparts of turf all round, seems to have been the great stronghold and camp of refuge of the upland tribes. All about are deep morasses along the steep scarped sides, a wild and desolate tract, from which it is a relief to escape to the softer scenes of Ribblesdale.

Settle, with its overhanging cliff of Castleberg, is in the way, noted for the limestone caves about it; where have been discovered relics of Celto-Roman occupation, as if the more civilised inhabitants of the district had taken refuge there against some barbarian invasion, and far below these relics were found the flint knives and rude implements of a primæval race, with the bones of the animals they chased or trapped for food. At Settle, once upon a time, time itself was measured in a way primitive in conception and yet grandiose. The Castleberg itself formed the gnomon of a rude but magnificent sun-dial, the shadow of which passing over certain rocks arranged upon its side, pointed out the hours as they passed. The stones have been removed, and the shadow of the berg now passes unheeded. Perhaps the sun appeared rather oftener

in those days than now, when, if the town depended upon its rays, it would lose its count of time for weeks together. There are grand scenes about here all along the ridge of the great Craven Gault; a break in the limestone range that produces a line of fine inland cliffs, and terrific gorges known as Scars. These scenes are rarely visited by people from the south, but the thriving towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire provide a pretty constant stream of tourists. Many a romantic valley has its tutelary genius in the shape of a chartered guide, who levies a small fee for his services. He may represent for us the hermit of old times who performed similar functions.

Coming to Skipton we are once more in the domain of the chronicler. Skipton Castle is notable as the former home of the Cliffords; of the hero of the Red Rose, the fell Clifford, the butcher Clifford, as he is handed down to us by Shakespeare in his Henry the Sixth, the slayer of young Rutland and of York, young Rutland's father. Clifford was no worse than the rest, perhaps, for there was little ruth on either side. The Yorkists would have hunted down his infant son after their victory, but the mother escaped with her boy from Skipton Towers, and wandering about among the woods and fells of Cumberland found an asylum with an old shepherd. By this shepherd the boy was adopted and trained to the shepherd's calling, and thus he lived till Bosworth Field brought the Lancastrians to power. And then the shepherd lord, as he was ever after called, was restored to the castles and possessions of his ancestors, but remained always a humble simple-minded man:

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
His daily teachers had been woods and rills.
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

Thus he shunned the company of people of his own degree, and retired to Barden Tower, among the moors above Bolton Priory, his chief associates being the monks of that ancient foundation, with whom he would spell out the stars at night, having, perhaps, gathered some of the traditional lore of shepherds in his youth. It was whispered, too, that beside the mystic science of the astrologer, he dabbled with his friends in the scarcely lawful pursuits of alchemy. His son, inheriting the wild blood of the Cliffords, emulated the exploits of Falstaff and Prince Hal, supplying his

purse by taking to the roads, and levying black-mail on travellers, but, like the prince, reformed when he came into his kingdom. This young Clifford, it is thought, is the hero of the ancient ballad of The Nut Browne Mayde. When sixty years old the shepherd lord turned out to fight at Flodden Field at the head of his tenants from the dales of Craven :

Whose milk fed fellows, fleshy bred,
Well brown'd with sounding bows up bend.

There is a story, too, of Skipton and the Cliffords in the reign of Henry the Eighth, When Yorkshire had risen for its shrines and holy places, and the pilgrims of grace seemed for the time to carry all before them, the Cliffords held to the king, and Skipton was besieged by the armed host under Aske of Aughton. As it happened, when the castle was invested, Lady Eleanor Clifford with her infant son and daughter were staying at Bolton Priory, and the leaders of the host swore with many oaths that if the castle were not surrendered on the morrow, the children should be slain and their gentle mother handed over to the mercies of the soldiery. Aske himself was above any such cruelties, but he was, perhaps, overborne by the clamour of his followers. Anyhow Kit Aske, his brother, with the vicar of Skipton, a groom, and a boy, crossed the moor with led horses, and evading all armed parties, brought the lady and her children safely back to the castle, the siege of which was quickly raised.

In Skipton Church lie the last of the Cliffords, Earls of Cumberland in later days, the last of whom died while his castle of Skipton was beleaguered by the Parliamentary forces. The last of the race was Lady Ann Clifford, a notable woman, Dowager Countess of Dorset, of Pembroke, and Montgomery, who restored Skipton Castle to its present state, as an inscription over the entrance testifies.

As we come to Bolton Priory in its pleasant green nook by the Wharf, sheltered by the encircling hills, a crowd of associations come upon us, and memories not so much of the ancient occupants, as of those who not long ago were among us to whom this lovely scene has been a pilgrimage of delight. Of the poets, too, who have sung its legends—the one legend rather which in its sorrowful human interest has come down to us when so much else has been forgotten, of the only son who was drowned in leaping the Strid, where

the river is pent up in a narrow chasm a few feet wide.

He sprang in glee, for what cared he
That the river was strong, and the rocks were steep ;
But the greyhound in the leash hung back
And checked him in his leap.

And the tidings brought to the mother in the question, "What is good for a bootless bene ?"

And she made answer, "Endless sorrow !"
For she knew that her son was dead.

And so the stately priory was reared, but the mother's heartbreak seems to have lasted longer than the priory and still to be felt in the soft melancholy of the scene.

Criticism has tried to demolish the legend altogether, but there is sufficient reason to believe in its substantial truth, although it applies to the original foundation at Embsay near Skipton and not to its subsequent removal to Bolton. When the priory was dissolved in Henry the Eighth's time, the monks had begun the building of a new tower at the west end of the church, and for long years afterwards it is said that the crane for hoisting stone remained in the half-finished tower, like that which was long so familiar a feature in the city of Cologne, and so long as the crane remained the county people still had faith that the monks would one day come back again.

Lower down the vale of Wharf, and passing Ilkley with its lodging-houses and hydropathics, its crystal springs and health-giving moors, we come to Otley, in the church of which is a monument to the first Lord Fairfax. The ancestral home of the Fairfaxes was at Denton, in this parish, and although the house has long since been destroyed and the family gone, yet the fame of them still lingers in the neighbourhood. The first Lord Fairfax who lies in Otley church fought in the wars of religion in France; and served, it is said, at the siege of Rouen by Henry Quatre, to which siege our Elizabeth furnished a contingent under the Earl of Essex. On his return he seems to have brought home with him the courtly severity of tone that distinguished the Reformed in Normandy. A younger brother, Edward by the way, stopped quietly at home and translated Tasso into English verse. The warrior was created Baron Fairfax of Cameron, by King James the First, and had at least two sons who fought in foreign wars, always against the Pope and the Spaniards. The elder, Ferdinando, came home safely to succeed to the title. The younger fell in the defence of Frankenthal

in the lower Palatinate, fighting for the cause of the unfortunate Elector and his spirited wife Elizabeth Stuart, she who preferred a crust as Queen—and actually came to want one—to live in plenty as an Electress.

A fine portrait of this young hero hung in Denton Hall, and once saved the hall itself from destruction in the time of the civil wars; for Prince Rupert, son of the Palatine be it remembered, marching to the relief of York quartered himself one night at Denton Hall, and had already given orders that the hall should be sacked and burnt as the nest of the malignant Fairfaxes, when his attention was struck by the life-like portrait. He learnt whom it commemorated—the youth who had died for the cause of his, Rupert's, father and mother. And then Rupert ordered that all in the house should be respected, and rode off, he and his horsemen, on their way to Marston Moor.

When the king's standard was first raised at Nottingham, his chief strength was in the north, and Yorkshire was mostly in his favour, except the clothing districts of the West Riding. The Fairfaxes, loyal in sentiment but of the true-blue Presbyterian model, reluctantly took the side of the Parliament, and as the men of most influence in their county, were appointed—Ferdinando, the father, as general commanding in the north, and his son as commander-of-horse. The son, Sir Thomas, generally known as Black Tom, of swarthy complexion, with black moustaches and imperial something after the Stuart fashion, but with the plain white Cromwellian collar over his gorget and the Parliamentary scarf bound about his coat of mail—as we see him in prints of the period, bareheaded as he fought at Naseby, and on his prancing war-horse, while with his staff he marshals squadrons in the field—this Sir Thomas began the campaign in a very unsuccessful way. Indeed, the pair of them were very heartily beaten, thrashed, and knocked about by the bold and dashing Cavaliers, and were utterly crushed, as it seemed, at last by Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, upon Atherton Moor. The father was driven in rout upon Leeds, while the son with a handful of men had retired upon Bradford, separated from the main body by the bulk of the king's forces. All seemed lost for them—the cause, their own lives; for they had been proclaimed as traitors, and could expect no other fate. To keep the field any longer was impossible, and there was no garrison to retreat to; for Hull, which

was nominally held for the Parliament, had failed them, the governor, Hotham, having made up his mind to declare for the king, and warning them away from his gates.

While Lord Fairfax was turning over these things hopelessly in his mind, as he lay that night at Leeds surrounded by the enemy, a messenger came to him secretly from the mayor of Hull, to let him know that the townsmen had secured Hotham, the governor, and that he, Lord Fairfax, would be very readily and gladly received there—a turn of things which naturally enough seemed to those interested a special interposition of Providence on their behalf. What had promised to complete their ruin had redeemed them from destruction. For on the very day of the defeat of Atherton Moor, Hotham, who had long been balancing between the two parties, declared openly for the king and tried to open communication with the royal forces. But the townsmen, with the help of some sailors from the fleet then in the North Sea, took possession of the fortifications—the garrison remaining neutral in the matter—and finally secured the governor and his son.

Meantime, Black Tom at Bradford had made up his mind to cut his way to his father at Leeds. His wife and daughter were with him. There was no home for them now but the pad behind a trooper's saddle, and so they rode out of Bradford warily at the head of a handful of horsemen. The vedette announced the enemy at hand—a troop of horse drawn across the road. There was nothing for it but to dash at them, Fairfax and one or two more getting through with clash of swords and ringing pistol-shots. He reins up; there are no more to follow. The child is safe, but his wife—where is she? Lost in the mêlée of dust and glittering steel. Fairfax rides sorrowfully on to Leeds.

Leeds is no place of refuge, father and son agree, and away for Hull on the instant. Hull is sixty miles distant, with hostile garrisons and armed bands intervening. Black Tom leads the way through by-ways, and green lanes, and hidden bridle-paths, and with great good fortune brings his party in safety to Selby, where there is a ferry over the broad Ouse; and they hope soon to have the river between them and the enemy. But just by the river strand a troop of horse bursts upon them, and there is nothing for it but to gallop on towards Lincolnshire. A shot from the enemy breaks the wrist of Fairfax, but on they gallop still among the enemy's

posts, and likely at any moment to be overwhelmed. Writes Fairfax himself: "I had been twenty hours on horseback after I was shot, and as many hours before; and as a farther affliction my daughter, not above five years old, endured all this retreat on horseback, being carried before her maid; but nature not being able to hold out any longer, she fell into frequent swoonings, and in appearance was ready to expire her last. Having now passed the Trent, and seeing a house not far off, I sent her with her maid only thither with little hopes of seeing her any more alive."

But riding on some way farther a vessel is espied in the river, which turns out to have been sent from Hull for their succour, and they all get on board just as the enemy appears in force. Soon they are landed in Hull, black, tattered, and bloodstained, and are received with hearty welcome. Next day the girl is brought in safe and sound (she is doomed hereafter to live in splendid misery as wife of the Duke of Buckingham), and after that Madam Fairfax herself in her own coach, with a trumpet from the enemy and Cavendish of Newcastle's compliments. For Cavendish is too much of a gentleman to war upon women. And so the adventure ends, happily enough for the Fairfaxes, while from this moment the fortune of war begins to change.

But that the Fairfaxes are still talked of in Yorkshire is due not so much to their fame in the civil wars as to a popular belief in an enormous estate that is somewhere waiting to be claimed by the heirs general of the family. Not that the line is extinct. There is, or was till very lately, a Lord Fairfax in America; but there is just enough about the later annals of the family to set people wildly speculating. The small basis for the popular belief is probably to be found in the purchase by Lord Colepeper, a maternal ancestor of the later Fairfaxes, who was governor of Virginia in 1680, of the proprietary right over five million two hundred thousand acres of land in Virginia, if not for an old shoe at least for some equally trifling consideration. In addition to this there was a private estate of three hundred thousand acres afterwards sold by the heirs. But, sad to say, the former grant was declared void by the American revolutionary government, and the five million acres are not likely to benefit anybody connected with the Fairfax family.

THE NEW MRS. WILDE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

MISS MINNIE WATSON raved and rent her hair, and did a number of other futile things when the happy pair went in to her presence together, and her brother-in-law made the announcement to her that he meant to take Miss Dunstan to wife. She poured out fierce denunciations against their "indecent haste" in thinking of wedding before the legitimate twelve months of mourning for his first wife—the mother of his children—had expired. And she frightened Ella a little by saying:

"And if you're fool enough to think Miss Dunstan is marrying you for love, you are a poor deluded idiot, George Wilde. I happen to know a little about a poor young lieutenant in the navy called Dering, who couldn't afford to marry a pretty, penniless young lady on his pay, but who did afford to make love to her. You see, Miss Dunstan, your secret is not such a secret as you thought."

Ella turned her flushed indignant face towards her new lover.

"Am I to account to you for every one of my former acquaintances, Mr. Wilde? I will tell you at once that there was a time when, if I could have had my way, I would have married Mr. Dering, whether he could have afforded to marry on his pay or not. But that time was past—I had grown more prudent before I ever saw you."

"We will never refer to the subject again, my darling," he said rapturously, and again baffled Miss Watson metaphorically rent her hair, and gnashed her teeth.

Miss Dunstan went home with all due propriety to her father's house in London, from whence she was married just a month after that stroll between the laurel hedges. Aunt Minnie meanwhile stayed on at Glenthorne, poisoning the children's minds against the new Mrs. Wilde as much as lay in her power.

The day before Ella's marriage, her mother, a soundly sensible woman, without a particle of romance in her nature, said to her daughter:

"Ralph Dering came to see us last Tuesday, Ella. I've forgotten to tell you before, but I know how glad you'll be to hear of his luck; he has got the secretaryship to some club, I forget which now, but it's worth quite seven hundred a year to him, he told us."

Ella's face paled, and she felt her lips

trembling; but Mrs. Dunstan was down on her knees packing a travelling-trunk, and the expression of her daughter's face passed unnoticed.

"Did he know—did you tell him I was at home?" she asked, steadying her voice by a great effort.

"I did, and that you were to be married to-morrow. He didn't offer very warm congratulations, I thought, but he never was one to say much."

"Perhaps he remembered the time when I wanted to marry him, though you seem to have forgotten it, mother," Ella said bitterly.

"No, my dear, I haven't; but that would have been a most imprudent match at the time. And even now you can't compare his seven hundred a year with Mr. Wilde's seven thousand. Oh no, no; we've nothing to regret, and everything to be thankful for."

"I know that, of course."

"Now you'll find all your laces and collars and little things in this top compartment," Mrs. Dunstan said, rising from her knees. "Why, Ella, crying!"

"Mother, I hope—I pray I may never see or hear of Ralph Dering again."

"Well, you're not likely to, he being in London, and you in Cornwall," Mrs. Dunstan said reassuringly. But Ella did not seem to derive much comfort from the remark.

The next day they were married, and Ella learnt that her husband had settled four hundred a year on her absolutely and unconditionally, "to do what she liked with, and to leave to whom she pleased."

"The new Mrs. Wilde has a good time of it," everyone says when they go back to their beautiful Cornish home, and it is seen that he surrounds his wife with every luxury that wealth and taste can procure. Her set of sables, her carriage-horses, her pair of ponies, her jewellery, her Parisian dresses, are quite the topics of the neighbourhood. It is true that the friends of the first wife hold aloof from her, but this does not disturb the new Mrs. Wilde at all. She does not care to be constantly mixing with the people who knew her when she was a governess. They always seem to be taking it for granted that she must think herself surprisingly fortunate, and on the whole she "prefers knowing only the county people," she tells her husband.

Gradually a great change comes over him. He gives up his life-long habits of

reserve, seclusion, and study, and becomes the shadow of his gay and pretty wife, and she is rarely at rest.

She takes no pleasure in her beautiful house and gardens, unless strangers are with them to admire, and perhaps envy her the possession of these things. All her former occupations pall upon her, and unless there is some excitement going on, she finds Glenthorne a deadly hole, she frankly avows. There is a little estrangement now between her and the children, by whom she was once so well liked. As their governess she was perfect, but the big girls, who are rapidly growing into womanhood, cannot forget their own mother, and do not like to see the way in which the girl whom their own mother trusted queens it in her place.

But her husband becomes more infatuated with her daily, more subservient to her lightest whim and caprice, more lavish of rich gifts, more eager to win love from her in return.

So things go on for three or four years.

Violet is a girl of nineteen now, very pretty and very attractive, for it is well known that Mr. Wilde's daughters will all be well portioned.

By this time, Glenthorne, among other things, has palled on Mrs. Wilde.

The everlasting rain depresses her, she says, and the biting winds blow her out of her mind. Besides, for Violet's sake, it is their duty to see more of the world than can be seen away down in Cornwall.

Ever ready to oblige her, Mr. Wilde takes a house in London for the season, and as all her Cornish county set are in town, Mrs. Wilde and her step-daughter are well launched.

One day she meets her old friend Mr. Dering again, and the avidity with which he follows up this chance rencontre flatters her. Ah, she holds sway over his soul still, though she did jilt him, and she talks about it very prettily and properly to her husband, telling him that "it will be well not to invite Ralph Dering to their house."

But Mr. Wilde only laughs, and assures her that he can trust her, and Mr. Dering too.

In the middle of the season a shock of such an unexpected nature befalls them, that Mrs. Wilde cannot for a time determine whether she is most grieved or relieved. Mr. Wilde dies suddenly, and then it gets known that the grave quiet

man had known for many years that he held his life, so to say, in his own hand, and that any unwonted excitement or agitation would be fatal to him. Since his second marriage—his children remember this bitterly now—he has relaxed this strict guard over himself, and has allowed himself to be swept hither and thither in search of perpetual excitement by his pleasure-loving young wife.

It soon transpires that Mrs. Wilde is a well-dowered widow. The three daughters have fair fortunes, but, to their grievous disappointment, beautiful Glenthorne, the home where they were born, and where their mother died, is left to the widow.

And she glories in the possession of it, and longs for the hour to come which will see Ralph Dering reigning there as master.

That he was devoted to her still she never for a moment doubted. Why else had he followed up that chance meeting in town last season so assiduously? She had never given him look or word of encouragement, to her honour be it said, and still he had made himself her shadow. Sometimes she had feared that Violet would suspect that he was an old lover on the track again, but Violet had never seemed to suspect anything.

Some business which could have adjusted itself equally well at Glenthorne took the widow up to town early in the spring, and a friendly little note, apprising him of the fact, brought Ralph Dering to call upon her at her father's house immediately afterwards.

He, the young impulsive lover of her youth, had changed now into a fine, steady, strong-purposed man, for whom she found herself conceiving a great respect, in addition to the love which she had always borne him. It was a glorious thing, she thought, that now love and expediency could go hand in hand. All the goodness and unselfishness of her earlier days seemed to be springing forth into new life, as she pictured the existence that was before her, with Ralph Dering for her husband.

She was so possessed by this idea that it hurt and disappointed her that he did not propose himself to become her husband at once. Instead of this he was only very frankly friendly, not lover-like at all.

"Ah," she thought when he took his departure, "he's afraid of the opinion of the world; he fears people will say that he's a fortune-hunter; but I know him too well to care what the world says."

Still this diffidence of his continuing she

grew tired of it, and sought to show him how groundless were his fears, by inviting him to come on a visit to her at Glenthorne.

Her heart bounded when she saw how he rejoiced in receiving the invitation, and with what eagerness he accepted it.

"Are your step-daughters at home?" he asked with some interest, and she laughed as she thought his question arose from some doubt he had as to the propriety of visiting her alone.

"Yes, they're all at Glenthorne at present; I suppose they'll all be taking wing soon," she answered.

"Have you any reason to think there is any probability of Miss—of either of the Miss Wildes becoming engaged, or marrying?" he asked.

"Well, yes, to tell the truth, I have; but I am not at liberty to say anything about it, even to you yet; when you come down to Glenthorne you will be able to aid me with your judgment, for by that time, I suppose, the affair will have progressed, and I shall have to offer an opinion."

"It must be one of the two younger girls," Mr. Dering thought. But still he wished his old friend Ella had been less romantically mysterious about it.

The fact was Ella's former lover had grown to look upon her merely as an "old friend." All the love within him now was given to—all the hopes within him were centred upon—her beautiful step-daughter Violet.

It was hard upon the widow that she had not even a suspicion of this fatal change of sentiment towards herself. She was so fair a woman now, so far more interesting and companionable a woman than she had been in her girlhood, that it naturally never entered into her head to even so much as fear that the man who had loved her then did not love her even better now. So though his procrastination (which she put down as adoring humility) pained her not a little, she had a firm conviction that when he came to Glenthorne the old order of things between them would speedily re-assert itself.

Back at Glenthorne before he came, it was borne in upon the woman who was hungering for a revival of the old romance, that her grown-up step-daughters would be more or less in the way. Especially Violet, for Violet, more from habit than sympathy, was her almost constant companion. The other two girls relied on one another more,

and could be disposed of and got out of the way without any wrench of custom.

But Violet would take it for granted that she was to accompany Mrs. Wilde in all her drives, and rides, and walks as usual.

Therefore she resolved to get rid of Violet.

There was very little difficulty about this. Every house in the neighbourhood was open to the rich and pretty Miss Wilde, especially the houses in which dwelt marriageable sons. To one of these Mrs. Wilde betook herself one day, taking with her as a propitiatory offering a basket of hot-house flowers of a rare kind, which she knew did not grow in her neighbour's hot-houses, and another basketful of the specially fine-flavoured trout which came out of the Glenthorne lake.

The neighbour to whom these offerings were made was the Hon. Mrs. Adean, of Hill House, the happy and proud mother of two sons, the elder of whom had inherited a fine property from his late father, and the younger of whom tried to live like his brother on the pay of captain in a line regiment and a slender allowance from his mother.

It was not her fault, poor woman, that this allowance was slender. With all her heart she would have increased it, but to do so would have crippled her without materially benefiting Captain Adean. Hill House had to be "kept up" in a certain style, for it was the Adean dower-house, and the wife of the present head of the house was impressive on the subject of its being his mother's duty to keep the place in good order.

"Because, you know, I may have to go there one day," she would remark resignedly.

Gifts of rare flowers, fish, and fruit were very welcome to Mrs. Adean at all times. But they were doubly so now, for Captain Adean was at home, and her table had to be unusually well set forth.

The mother's heart throbbed with joy when the step-mother asked if "dear Mrs. Adean would mind having Violet for a few days? Poor dear Violet is looking pale, and the Glenthorne air is so enervating. I quite felt the difference myself as I drove up here; the air of Hill House is so bracing it would do her all the good in the world, poor darling. But you mustn't let her know I've asked you; it might alarm her if she knew I was anxious about her."

Mrs. Adean would be circumspection

itself. She would write and invite Violet that very day. How her heart beat with joy, poor old lady, at the thought of locating one of the Wilde co-heiresses in the house with the beloved son whose wants her own resources were so utterly unable to supply.

"Fred being at home it won't be so dull for her as if I were alone," she said hesitatingly, for she feared how the step-mother might receive the intelligence of Captain Adean's presence. But Mrs. Wilde had known of the fact, and had been delighted thereat, calculating that it gave her an additional chance of keeping Violet out of the way of Mr. Dering and herself.

Violet went willingly enough. All places were alike to her now, and had been alike to her since the day Ralph Dering had whispered words of love to her last summer, or rather since the day when she began to doubt that he would ever follow those words up.

Old Mrs. Adean had known her mother too, and Violet loved her mother's memory still. And Fred Adean was a capital man to ride with, because he never tried to hinder her from going at anything.

So in absolute ignorance that the man for whom she was pining was even now on his way to Glenthorne, Violet went contentedly to Hill House.

Mr. Dering arrived, and the look of blank disappointment which spread itself over his face when his hostess told him that her eldest step-daughter was from home on a visit, revealed the truth to her. It was Violet he had come to see, Violet whom he had grown to love.

This to be the end of it all! That she, Ella, should have sacrificed herself for money, and then been ready to bestow the price of the sacrifice and herself upon this renegade lover, while he had basely fallen in love with Violet! With Violet, who was now at Hill House flirting with young Adean! This last reflection calmed the widow. If young Adean and Violet could be taken red-handed in the crime of flirting, Mr. Dering might see the error of his ways, and come to the conviction that after all "old things were best."

She was a charming hostess, and the presence of the two younger girls did not hamper her at all. Indeed, when after dinner they had played their regulation pieces and sung their regulation songs, they were only too glad to get themselves away to their own room, when they amused themselves by laughing at "Mrs.

Wilde for flirting with a man who had flirted with Violet last summer!" For they had heard a word or two from their sister, and not knowing that there had been anything serious in the affair, they were inclined to regard it merely as an additionally ridiculous feature in Mrs. Wilde's present absurd case.

Before Mrs. Wilde said good-night to her guest she had "treated him quite like a friend," and given him to understand that she hoped her "dear Violet was going to be very, very happy."

"I am not justified in saying more at present, but you'll see them in a day or two, and then, if things are as I think, you will feel with me that Violet has chosen wisely. Good-night. I do hope you will sleep well this first night that you spend at my own dear Glenthorne."

"So Violet was a little humbug, too," he said to himself disconsolately as he tumbled about on his spring mattress and down pillows. "Violet a humbug! and the child hasn't been tempted to turn from me for riches as the other one was. After all, I've been hard on poor Ella I begin to think. She has a noble nature, and will feel for me when I tell her how her step-daughter has deceived me."

Being only a man, he really thought that Ella had blotted out the old romance as completely as he had himself. But the memory of these things gets imprinted so indelibly on a woman's heart that even brutality, as many a brute can testify, can't "blot it out."

The distempered musings of the night did not leave him very "fit" for the breakfast-table. But he was astounded at himself when he found how fast his spirits and interest in things generally were reviving during the meal. Ella, in a black Indian muslin wrapper, cascaded with white lace, looked very charming. And Glenthorne by daylight was a very lovely place. And the two young girls, Violet's sisters, were very bright elements at the breakfast-table. Altogether, he could not be quite so doleful as he had been during the long, dark hours of the night.

"I give an hour to my housekeeper after breakfast, and after that I never permit myself to be bothered with a domestic detail for the remainder of the day," Mrs. Wilde said to him presently; and as he looked at her in her smiling pretty prosperity he could not but remember the girl he had wooed and won and parted from

from prudential considerations in the dreary old London parsonage.

"And at the end of that hour?" he asked.

"At the end of that hour I shall look at my letters, answer such as must be answered, and then do my best to amuse my guest."

"Your guest requires no better diversion than to be permitted to humbly follow in the wake of his hostess, whithersoever her will may take her. Yes, he does; he asks that she will listen to a little story he has to tell."

"To any story, long or short, if only you're the teller of it," she said, with her heart playing "Pit-a-pat" faster than any experienced nurserymaid could have played the game.

And the thought of this story that was to be told to her presently rendered her more than usually patient with the housekeeper's rather prolix details.

Something interfered with the lucid telling of the story that day. He faltered away from and was apparently a little afraid of his subject, and she, feeling that she had plenty of time and that the opportunities were all on her side, played him skilfully and set him quite at ease.

So much at ease, indeed, that Violet's perfidy, as he considered it, ceased to be quite so hateful in his eyes as it had been when the possibility of it was first presented to his vision.

Several days passed in this fashion, the step-mother wooing and winning him almost against her own will and his. She would far rather have been the sought than the seeker, but "Fate seemed too strong for her," she told herself. In other words, she was too impatient to have things settled according to her own wishes.

CHAPTER III.

A NOTE about this period passed from the second Miss Wilde to her elder sister at Hill House. One of the paragraphs in it was as follows:

"There's a Mr. Dering staying here, the one you liked in London last year; if I were you I'd just show him I could forget him as easily as he does you; he's always running after our step-mamma, and she's always flinging her 'lonely lot' and our Glenthorne at his head. Why did we ever think her a darling and prefer her to Aunt Minnie, and persuade papa to keep her? Anyway, Aunt Minnie wouldn't have done us out of Glenthorne, or you

out of Mr. Dering. Captain Adean is ever so much nicer than Mr. Dering. You may tell him I say so if you like.—Your loving sister, **ETHEL WILDE.**"

"I think I should like to ride over to Glenthorne to-day," Violet said meekly, when a ride was proposed to her that morning after the receipt of her sister's note, by Captain Adean. But fate, in the person of Aunt Minnie Watson, prevented them from going in the direction which might have led Violet to happiness.

Aunt Minnie, a confirmed and avowed spinster now, had taken up her residence for several years in a comfortable little house of the square and weather-tight order in the high-street of a little market town within a convenient distance of Glenthorne. From this vantage ground she had kept a strict watch on the goings-on in poor George's house, while poor George lived. Now that he was dead, ingress to Glenthorne was made more difficult to her by the unconcealed air of hostility which Mrs. Wilde adopted towards her former rival and oppressor. Nevertheless, few things transpired in the family with which Aunt Minnie was not acquainted sooner or later.

Disagreeable and narrow-minded as she undoubtedly was, the girls had a certain amount of natural affection for her, and, as she always made them warmly welcome to her cosy little house, they visited her pretty frequently, and generally found themselves led on to narrate in detail everything they could think of relative to their step-mother.

But Miss Minnie Watson was too old a diplomatist to rely solely on one source of information relative to the enemy's tactics. Her own familiar maid and the upper-housemaid at Glenthorne were on terms of touching intimacy, and the upper-housemaid had visited her friend on the evening previous to the day on which Violet proposed to ride over to Glenthorne.

The road from Hill House to Glenthorne ran through the little town in which Miss Minnie Watson lived, and according to her usual custom Miss Watson was sitting at her bow window watching what was going on in the quiet little street, when she saw her niece and Captain Adean riding by.

To signal Violet in was but natural, and the pair of young people got off their horses, gave them in charge to a butcher's boy, and walked into Aunt Minnie's house just as Mrs. Wilde and Mr. Dering drove

into the high-street from the Glenthorne side, and stopped at the principal grocer's.

"There go Violet and her lover, you see," Mrs. Wilde said carelessly, pointing the pair out to Ralph Dering. But though she spoke carelessly, she was keenly on the alert to detect the slightest sign of emotion in the man whom she was stabbing.

"Ah, indeed! a fine-looking fellow," he said with an overdone indifference that told his story plainly. And Mrs. Wilde hated her step-daughter as she had never thought it possible she could hate anyone, and vowed that never—no, never!—would she give Ralph Dering and Violet an opportunity of coming to an explanation.

"He shall be bound to me, married to me, before I let them meet," the jealous fury thought. And she resolved to prolong her drive so that day, that if Violet went to Glenthorne she should have no chance of seeing him.

"I suppose she is going in to introduce her fiancé, and announce her engagement to the aunt," she went on, and then she gave Mr. Dering an amusing picture of Miss Minnie Watson's peculiarities and malicious proclivities.

"Wouldn't Miss Wilde announce it to you first?" he asked.

"To me? To the hated step-mother? Oh no; perhaps when all the county knows it she will condescend to mention it to me. It's a terrible thing, Ralph, to be hated for no fault of one's own. My offence is that I became Mr. Wilde's wife in order that I might stay with the children, who really loved me then, and who he declared had no other friend but me. That is the real story of my marriage, Ralph. It was not from ambitious motives, or because of any greedy desire for money, as some people may have been hard and cruelly unjust enough to suppose, that I married Mr. Wilde. I did it because—because I knew there could be no happiness for me, so—oh, Ralph, forgive me—I seemed false because I thought it my duty to do all the good I could in the world, though—though no joy, no peace, could ever come to me through doing it."

It was a challenge, and he knew it to be such. But it sounded like a pathetic appeal, and men are apt to be taken in by mere sound when a woman strikes the notes.

"I never blamed you," he said hastily. "I was cut to the heart when I heard that you had forgotten everything, and were going to be married to that man, but I

never blamed you. I knew you were hard pressed."

"How hard pressed you will never know. Before I left home to come to Glenthorne I broke my heart over your broken promise to come and see me. Do you remember that day when I waited for you one whole afternoon in one of the rooms in Burlington House, and you waited for me in another? And when I confessed to my mother that I had been trying to see you, and you had failed to keep the tryst, she told me you were playing fast and loose with me, were fooling me, were not in earnest, and I grew mad."

"I called at your house day after day, and was refused admission, when I knew you were all at home."

"Oh, Ralph—Ralph! And I never knew it. For my sake, they told me afterwards, they kept me in ignorance of your having tried to see me; but now we are together again, and we are friends, are we not?"

Again that air of mingled challenge and appeal.

"Friends! I don't think that I can be contented that we should remain merely friends, Ella."

She occupied herself greatly with the management of her ponies. This was the first direct attempt at love-making which he had made, and it was very pleasant to her.

"False kindness to you parted us in our youth," he went on, "and now time has worked the inevitable change in us both. You and I can never again feel the old love, or the old rapturous hope that our love may be gratified, but we are affectionately disposed towards one another, and now that we each know that we were parted by prudence, and not by the wish or will of either of us, we can meet on safe, well-assured ground. As truly and honestly as in the old days, I can say to you: 'I will try to make you a happy woman if you will be my wife.'"

It was not very ardent wooing. But she yielded to it, for as fervently as in the old days of which he spoke so practically did she love this man now.

"No other love has made my heart speak since that day when we missed each other at Burlington House. Ralph, can you say the same?"

"No, I can't, dear; I have loved another woman—child rather—better than I ever thought it was in me to love after I lost you; but she is——"

He paused, and she asked eagerly:

"What is she—dead?"

"So dead to me that you need never suffer a jealous pang on her account."

"Did she know you loved her?"

"She could hardly fail to do that. When a man's whole being is permeated with love for a woman she rarely fails to detect it."

"From this day you mustn't indulge in retrospective repinings, Ralph," she said, and he felt that if he ever let her suspect that he was doing so there would not be very much happiness for him in his married life.

One fervent hope filled his breast, and that was that Violet would be married and away from their borders before he came down to Glenthorne as its master. But at the same time he knew that Ella would brook no long delay.

Meantime, as this pair drove leisurely along the lanes, settling their future, their current conduct was being sharply reviewed in Miss Minnie Watson's drawing-room.

"Well, Violet, these are nice goings-on that I hear of over at Glenthorne; I can't move without hearing of the way that dreadful person, who cajoled your poor father into marrying her and robbing his children, is behaving with that man who is staying there."

Violet's face turned scarlet as she listened, and her heart ached horribly. "That man," who was spoken of with such scathing scorn in connection with her step-mother, was as dear to her as she was to him; but he did not know it, and she was losing him.

"The rich, pretty widow was sure to marry again," Captain Adean said; "seems to me, doesn't much matter who the fellow is, you know."

"No human being can say anything against Mr. Dering," poor Violet muttered.

"Except that he's a fortune-hunter, and that his conduct in persuading that poor weak fool to marry him so soon after your poor father's death is indecent and ungentlemanly," Miss Watson said angrily. "A nice home it will be for you poor girls when he's her husband, and master at Glenthorne." Violet shuddered and turned pale, and felt, oh, how sick! "The servants say he is more consulted and deferred to already than ever your poor father was. It's 'Ask Mr. Dering what time he will have the horses round,' and 'Ask Mr. Dering which horses he will have in the carriage to-day.' And the architect has to consult him about the plans for the new conservatory; and altogether, he's quite

monarch of all he surveys already at Glenthorne."

Violet heard all this and believed it. So when they mounted their horses again she proposed to Captain Adean that, instead of going to Glenthorne as they had intended, they should go for a ride in another direction.

By-and-by, while riding through a rather narrow lane, they heard the quick patter of ponies' feet, and the noise of wheels, and, looking up, Captain Adean exclaimed:

"By Jove! here come the happy pair."

It was impossible to turn back, it was inevitable they should meet. For a moment Violet felt herself swerve in her saddle. Then she nerved herself to bear the cruel pain that was to be inflicted upon her.

Mrs. Wilde pulled up her ponies, bowing and smiling, and looking charmingly pretty and brilliantly happy.

"So glad to meet you, Violet. How bonnie you're looking! You remember Mr. Dering? Captain Adean—Mr. Dering. We have some news for you, Violet, and both of us would rather you heard it from us first. We have made up our minds that we can't get on without one another any longer, and, really, it's quite a romance,—isn't it, Ralph?—for we were lovers before ever I came to Glenthorne. I'll tell you all about it soon, Violet. Good-bye; take care of her, Captain Adean," and the vivacious widow drove on, beaming, laughing, and apparently quite oblivious of the desolation that visibly overspread the faces of both Violet and Ralph Dering.

"The widow in the first flush of excitement about her new venture, is rather of the bold-faced jig order," Captain Adean said coldly. "Violet, Glenthorne will be no home for you; will you come to me? Will you trust me, and let me 'take care of you,' as that woman said? Will you be my wife, dear?"

She shook her head, and began to cry with a bitterness that wrung his kind heart.

"No, Captain Adean; last summer my heart was asked for in every way but in open words. I gave it entirely, and now the man who took it is going to marry my step-mother. You are right; Glenthorne is no home for me, but neither can I be any man's wife, for I shall always care for him, and always feel that he has been unfairly turned from me."

So the scheme of uniting Violet to Captain Adean broke down, and Violet went

to stay with her aunt, Miss Minnie Watson.

The widow was married very soon to Mr. Dering at the parish church. He had travelled down by the night train, and knew nothing of the arrangements for the wedding. He was fairly contented and happy, and tried his hardest to make his mind dwell on all that was best in Ella's character.

"For one thing, she's frank and truthful as the day," he told himself; "I could never get on with a woman who could try to deceive me, even about trifles."

On their way home from church, he said:

"Your eldest step-daughter is, I suppose, married by this time?"

"No, she's not; you've never asked anything about her in your letters, so I forgot to tell you. It seems she never was engaged to Captain Adean. Silly girl! she might have been if she had liked, but she refused him; and so now she's gone abroad with her aunt to look for some place in which she can make a home for herself and her sisters. They're mad to lead a Continental life, and Violet vows that she will never come back to England."

"Thank Heaven for that!" he thought fervently. But from this moment he ceased to congratulate himself on his wife's frankness and veracity.

SOME OLD ARAB YARNS.

THE library of the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople possesses an Arab manuscript dating from the tenth century, entitled *Adja'ib al-Hind*, or the Wonders of India. This curious literary relic has quite recently been translated into French by M. Marcel Devic, who has added a large quantity of explanatory notes characterised by erudition rather than by decency or good taste. With that, however, we need not concern ourselves, our object being simply to enable our readers to form some idea of the extraordinary fictions which were accepted as truth by the credulity of Arabian mariners. Let us begin with natural history.

We are told by Mardouia, son of Zerâikht, that one day, as he was sailing in the Eastern seas, his ship passed between two sharp points rising high above the surface, which appeared to him like mountains. Suddenly they were drawn down into the depths, and then he perceived

that they were the claws of a crab. This story is trumped by a statement made by Ismail, son of Ibrahim, son of Mardâs, who relates how he was anxious to run his vessel into shallow water on the coast of Sumatra to make some necessary repairs. Having let go his main anchor, he was surprised to find that the ship scudded on as swiftly as before. Accordingly, he desired the diver to slide down the cable and see what was the matter. The diver looked down and beheld a huge crab playing with the anchor, and dragging the vessel about as in sport. Pelting the monster with stones and uttering loud outcries, the crew at length drove it away, and anchored in a securer spot. In the Indian Ocean whales also grow to an enormous size. A fine specimen was driven ashore near the entrance to the Persian Gulf, which measured over two hundred ells in length, and fifty ells in thickness or height. The Emir Ahmed, son of Helal, rode into its jaws and passed out at the other end in view of a concourse of spectators. On the coast of Yemen might be seen the skeleton of a whale's head so large that a man could walk in at one eye and walk out at the other without once lowering his head.

A singular fish is described as frequenting the salt-water creeks of the Island of Serendeb or Ceylon. Its head, hands, and feet are human in appearance, but it is excellent eating, and superior to any other fish caught in those seas.

In the way of serpents, a skipper named Abou Mohammed, son of El Hassan, son of Amr, had a strange experience, the authenticity of which was vouched for by Ismail, son of Ibrahim, already cited. Running into a creek for shelter during a violent gale, he observed on the following morning a gigantic serpent, fearful to behold, plunge into the water, traverse the creek, climb the opposite bank, and glide away with startling rapidity. Towards nightfall it returned, but its movements were then slow and heavy. The same thing happened for five consecutive days. On the sixth the skipper bade some of his men follow the reptile and mark whither it went. On their return they reported that the snake repaired to a marshy ground completely covered with ivory tusks voided by that devourer of elephants. For several successive days the crew were employed in filling up the ship with ivory, throwing overboard their less valuable cargo. Almost incredible was the value of the

tusks they collected during their twenty days' detention. Another celebrated mariner, named Djafar, son of Rashid, spoke of a serpent that entered a bay on the Malabar Coast and swallowed a crocodile. The governor of the place forthwith despatched a body of troops to seize the monster. It took three thousand men to master it and fasten a rope round its neck. It was sixty feet in length, and weighed some thousands of pounds.

In India, it seems, there are three thousand one hundred and twenty species of snakes, the worst of all infesting the district of Taka. When the wind blows from that country, birds, beasts, reptiles, and men perish for a distance of three parasangs, so that the land is uninhabited until the wind sets in from the sea. The most alarming kind of sea-serpent is called "tannin." In mid-winter, when clouds skim along the surface of the deep, the tannin issues from the ocean and enters the cloud, still warm with the vapours from the tepid waves. As the caloric evaporates, the tannin is, so to speak, imprisoned in the cloud, which is borne aloft by the winds. In this manner it travels from one horizon to the other until, the cloud attenuating, it falls down on the land or on the water. In the former case, being hungry, it devours camels, horses, cows, and sheep, nor does it withdraw so long as anything remains to gratify its insatiable maw. Mariners, travellers, merchants, and ship-captains assured the anonymous compiler that they had more than once distinguished the tannin passing over their heads, black, with its body lengthened out and its tail hanging down. As soon as it felt the cool freshness of the air it would pull itself together and hide in the cloud. Modern sceptics have witnessed a similar phenomenon, but, instead of calling it a tannin, they give it the name of Waterspout.

In some of the Malay Islands there is a bird, known as the "semendel," which possesses a quality generally believed to be the exclusive appanage of the salamander. The plumage is bright and varied, red, white, green, and blue being harmoniously blended together. Fire has no effect upon it, and it can dispense for a long time with any other food than earth. While hatching its eggs it never touches a drop of liquid. As soon as the callow brood come forth they are left to themselves for a while, but flies and winged insects hover close around and supply their commissariat. As soon as their feathers have grown and they

are able to hop about, the parent birds become affectionate. There are birds in India of such vast proportions that it is no uncommon thing for a quill to contain as much water as an Indian mussuk, made out of the entire skin of a sheep. One voracious mariner averred that he had once seen a quill which would hold twenty-five of such measures. Another voyager, after floating about for ten days on a fragment of wood, drifted on to an island rich in fruit-trees. Growing weary of solitude, he set out to walk until he came to human habitations. After wandering for some days through a well-cultivated district, he came upon a hut, and beside it an empty reservoir. Entering the hut he fell asleep, and slept until a man approached driving two oxen, bearing twelve mussuks of water, which were emptied into the tank. The traveller roused himself and went out to drink of the water. He then examined the reservoir, the walls of which were smooth and polished as a sword-blade. In answer to his enquiry, the man with the oxen informed him that it was simply a bird's quill, and added that there were many birds about, which had much longer feathers.

For transport purposes these big birds were particularly useful. That renowned voyager, Ahmed, son of Ali, son of Mounir, used to relate, on the authority of a most respectable personage, a native of India, how seven men in succession were thus borne through the air to the mainland from a small island not far from Ceylon. They were the survivors of the crew of a shipwrecked vessel, and were pining away in hopeless exile, when they took notice of an enormous bird which, after grazing on the islet all day, would fly away towards sunset, whither they knew not. They agreed, therefore, that they would run every risk rather than continue to languish in misery. One of them accordingly concealed himself among the bushes, and, as the light began to wane, crawled stealthily towards the bird, and contrived to fasten himself to its legs by means of fibrous bark. The bird flew away, and carried him aloft. The man held on in desperation, while the bird crossed an arm of the sea, and alighted upon a mountain as the sun went down. Loosening his bonds, the man sank to the ground, worn out with fright and exhaustion. Where he fell, there he lay all that night. On the morrow he rose with the dawn, and, looking about him, discovered a shepherd,

who told him, in the Indian language, the name of a town not very distant, and gave him milk to drink. After a similar fashion the other shipwrecked sailors succeeded in gaining the mainland, and were soon reunited in the town mentioned by the shepherd. Thence, after a brief repose, they made their way to a seaport, and finally reached their several homes. The distance traversed by the bird, between the island and the mountain, was estimated to exceed two hundred parasangs, each parasang being equal to three miles of the length of ninety-six thousand inches, each inch being equal to six barley-corns laid side by side, while each barley-corn represented the breadth of seven mule hairs.

There is a very disagreeable place among the Malay Islands, where scorpions fly about like sparrows. If they sting a man his body swells, his skin comes off in shreds, and in the end he dies a miserable death. It may not be generally known, but in the highlands of Zanzibar may be found abundance of gold. Ship captains often employ themselves in digging for the precious ore, and sometimes come upon it in spots excavated like ant-hills. Immediately they are assailed by swarms of ants as big as cats, which incontinently tear them to pieces and devour them. Among the curiosities which Ahmed, son of Helal, intended to present to the Khalif Mogtadir, was a black ant of the size of a cat, shut up in an iron cage, and secured by an iron chain. Unfortunately it died on the journey, but it was carefully embalmed, and, in that condition, safely conveyed to Baghdad. It was a very voracious animal, and consumed a large quantity of meat, cut up small.

Here is another story about a bird, the truth of which has never been contested. A ship, outward bound for China, went down in the open sea. Half-a-dozen individuals, by clinging to portions of the wreck, were cast upon an island, where they remained several months. Life had become a burden to them, through the horrible monotony of their existence, when they beheld a bird, as big as an ox, alight upon the ground. "We are tired of this life," said they to one another, "let us throw ourselves upon this bird. If he kills us with his beak and talons, there will be an end of it, but, if we get the better of him, we will cut his throat, cook him, and eat him." So said, so done. Rushing upon the unwary bird, some clung to his legs, others hung on to

his neck, while their comrades stunned him with pieces of wood. At last they overcame all resistance. Then striking two stones one against the other they fabricated a knife with which they were able to bleed the bird, for otherwise, as good Mohammedans, they could not have eaten of the meat. Presently the bird was plucked, a mighty fire was lighted, the huge fowl was thrown upon it, and, being several times turned, was at last thoroughly broiled. Then they sat down and feasted. In the evening they made their supper off the fragments. On the morrow, when they went into the sea to make their ablutions, the hair fell from them as they rubbed themselves, so that in a little while their heads became as those of new-born babes. Three of the number were old men, who fared no better than the rest. And a great fear fell upon them. They made sure that the flesh of the bird was poisonous, and that they would all die in a day or two. But it fell out contrary to their expectations. Five days afterwards the hair began to grow afresh, and by the end of a month it had entirely returned, black and brilliant, without the admixture of a single grey hair. Some little time after that they sighted a sail in the offing, and made signals which were seen on board, and they returned to their native country. Some difficulty, however, was experienced at first in persuading people that the three young-looking men were really their aged relatives. Happily they were at last identified and all went well with them, nor did their hair ever fall off or grow grey.

This, too, is curious, and it is vouched for by an eye-witness. Mousa, of Sindabour, was conversing one day with the head man of the place, when the latter was irrepressibly moved to laughter. Presently he explained that one of the two lizards on the wall opposite to them had said to the other: "A stranger is coming to us as a guest." Mousa naturally thought that his host was light-headed or mocking at him, and was about to take his leave, when the other said: "Don't go away till you have seen the end of the affair." Just then a servant entered and reported the arrival of a vessel from the Persian Gulf. A few minutes later some baskets were brought in, and as one was opened, containing flasks of rose-water, a large lizard crawled out, climbed the wall, and joined the two that were expecting him.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III.

CHAPTER III. THE SUMMER OF THE HEART.

OBSCURITY is oftentimes safety. Had Mrs. Devenant been one of the county matrons—the equal of Lady Boscawen and other notabilities—had Hilda been a maiden of high degree, the frequency with which the young squire of Dale End betook himself along a certain woodland path, bestrewn with fragrant pine-spears, and musical with the song of many birds—a path that ran parallel with the river, and led picturesquely and unobtrusively to the White House—would have quickly become a matter of general discussion and dismayed comment. Doubtless also, Hester Devenant would have been denounced as a dangerous and designing person, and gentle Hilda as a forward and daring maiden.

As it was, led by the sweet desires for nearness and interchange of thought that are the silken cords with which love begins to bind his victims (preparatory to making them his abject and entire slaves), Ralph entered upon a new and beautiful Wonderland.

If the way to this enchanted country lay along a woodland path where on either hand rose the pines like so many slender minarets, giving here and there a glimpse of the far-off sea—if through their trellis-work of branches came a whispering wind that murmured of exquisite possibilities in a life yet to come—if every bird on every bough seemed to be singing one of the songs of a sweet paradise of promise, why, so much the better for the man who was assuredly learning to love well, if not just what the world that owned him would have called wisely.

The great thing in life, the very salt of life, is to be really in earnest; and assuredly Ralph was terribly in earnest in his love for Hilda Devenant. So much so, that when he believed himself to be only falling in love, he was over head and ears, and had laid all the best that was in him at a woman's feet.

He ceased to feel the loneliness of Dale End oppressive. Rather did he learn to love the quiet of the old place, since he peopled it with his own glowing fancies, and kept company with his own happy thoughts. He sung or whistled as he walked about the grounds and in the

shrubberies, or wandered from room to room.

The new buoyancy of his spirit communicated itself to those about him. Anthony Geddes became almost skittish, as might an ancient and worn-out steed cut a feeble gambol or two, and fondly renew the days of its youth in a fertile imagination. Even Gaylad brisked up a bit, and wagged his tail with spasmodic energy at the sound of his young master's voice. As to Jeremy, Ralph vowed there was no such gardener in existence; though it cannot be denied that functionary drew a long face when the young squire culled the rarest and choicest blossoms in the hot-houses, and made off with them, Heaven knew where. Every tenant on every farm, even to the smallest and most outlying, was visited by the lord of the manor, and repairs gone into to such a tune that Anthony more than once looked blank. Ralph was so happy himself he wanted to make all the world within his reach happy too. Mounted on his coal-black mare Ruby, he seemed to pervade Becklington and the country surrounding.

From one country house to another he went gaily, and the county folks said what a good thing it was he was getting over the troubles that had fallen so thick and fast upon his young life; while those who had large families of marriageable daughters enquired of one another with a certain wistfulness "if Ralph Stirling were likely to marry?"

Certainly the young man in question made himself charming on all social occasions. But, though many women found him charming, none found him tender—always excepting Lady Boscawen, whose heart held a very warm corner for him, and whom he believed to be the best of women.

"When it came to coming home," he once said to her, "I thought of you, and it seemed like having a sort of mother."

Lady Boscawen's long face twitched a little as she looked in Ralph's earnest face, and she showed no displeasure when he stooped and kissed her hand. She had lost her only son early in life, and Ralph often reminded her of what might have been and now could never be.

That same night she resolved to send for her sister Julia's second girl, a well-favoured damsel, who could sing like a lavrock and dance in high-heeled shoes with shiny buckles so that "all the world

wondered," upon a visit of indefinite length.

"It will be a kindness to Julia, and an excellent thing altogether," quoth Lady Boscawen to her lord (darkly hinting at future possibilities); at which Sir Denby only grunted out something that his spouse felt convinced would be better ignored. Like most men he had a great horror of match-making, and, being only mortal, could not resist a grin when the enticing damsel having arrived (armed with every weapon most calculated to bring about the subjugation of man), Ralph, not without some reproach in his manner, pathetically asked Lady Boscawen why she had imported a visitor, seeing that things were "so much nicer when they were alone?"

"It is very unkind of you to laugh, Denby," said Lady Boscawen.

"I am not laughing," replied that perplexed individual, who couldn't bear to ruffle his wife's peace of mind, and felt ready to order Ralph to marry Julia's second girl on the spot.

"Well, you are smiling, and that is worse—it insinuates more," said Lady Boscawen, lifting her Roman nose, and glancing scathingly at her husband.

Sir Denby mumbled out a hope that "things would improve one of these days."

But they didn't, as far as Ralph and the young lady were concerned, so that at last Lady Boscawen was constrained to say that she feared his heart was hard as the nether millstone—it being impossible that there could be anything more suited to melt a heart of proper consistency than Julia's second girl.

But Ralph's heart was not hard at all. He happened to have given it away, even to the smallest atom. He had absolutely kept back none of it. He was always wondering that the world held such a woman as Hilda Devenant. It was a greater wonder still that this marvel of beauty, and tenderness, and self-devotion could be—for him.

Surely, he thought, he must have been born under some lucky star! He could not look upon himself as the same as other men, or as one who stood on the same level with them. He seemed to himself as a thing apart. He was as a crowned king—in that Hilda loved him.

For he was sure she did that.

In his solitary musings this conviction lighted up all his heart and mind as a lamp lights a room and fills with warmth and beauty.

Even that strange picture in his father's favourite room, that grim presentment of the dying miser, became the channel for pleasant, in lieu of gloomy thoughts.

"The heart should be set on love, not on gold," he said once, speaking out loud in the earnestness of his mood, and standing opposite the man who lay writhing as he watched his treasure rifled; "for death cannot kill love. We can take love with us when we go."

From which it will be seen that his love for Hester Devenant's daughter was a passion, not a fancy; that its roots had taken hold of his whole being, and that if it had to be torn forth, then would his heart bleed, and in it would fester a deep and gaping wound.

Yes, Hilda loved him! Why else the dawn of that dear content in her sweet serious eyes meeting his in gladdest greeting? Why else that tremble on her lips as she bade him adieu—that little sigh (not of anger) as he made her hand a long and willing prisoner? More than all, why else that sure firm trust in his sympathy with every sorrow that touched her gentle heart?

Yet the reading, or trying to read, Hilda's character was not all plain sailing even to the man whose eyes were sharpened by love, whose perceptions were made keen by an eager longing after perfect knowledge.

Open and confiding as a child in some ways, there were yet shut chambers in Hilda's heart of which Ralph could not find the key. There was some "trouble" between her and the vicar's wife; that "Miss Alicia" who had let Gabriel's little daughter make tinkling music on the keys of the old spinet, taught her to sing quaint "songs of love and longing," and fed her with syllabub in the housekeeper's room in the days when old Squire Ashby reigned at Dale End.

"She is an ideal woman," said Ralph once, as he and Hilda wandered by the river; "she is like music, making all things sweet about her."

But as he spoke thus of Cuthbert Deane's wife, Ralph noticed that fair Hilda's nut-brown head was turned aside, and he saw the hand that clasped its fellow tremble.

When she looked at him again it was through the sheen of tears.

"She is all that, and more," said the girl, with lips that shook as they spoke. "She is one of Heaven's blessed com-

forters. I know it all, Master Ralph, better even than you do."

"And yet——" said Ralph.

"And yet there are things I cannot speak of—even to you," answered Hilda, and turned to other topics.

Then there was Davey. He was another puzzle. Neither Hilda nor her mother cared to speak of him. Once when Ralph said he hoped for his return, Mrs. Devenant pressed her hand upon her bosom as though some sudden pang had pierced her through and through, while Hilda, with a new and strange defiance in her look and voice, bade Ralph go, and leave the two—mother and daughter—alone.

"Has there been any quarrel between the Devenants and Davey?" said Ralph to the vicar's wife a few days later.

"Hilda never told me so. She has lost all confidence in me, Ralph—all love for me," answered Alicia sadly. "But I think—nay, I am sure—that Davey loved her."

"Did he tell her so?" said Ralph. The words did not come easily.

"I think he did. There was something very strange and sad over them both at one time."

"Yes, that is it," thought Ralph as he took his way home through the twilight. "Davey loved her, and Mrs. Devenant knew it. The poor soul is so dependent on my darling now that the thought of Davey's return—the return of the lover who wanted to steal the one dear thing life holds for her—could not be borne."

This reflection, wise and plausible as it was, opened unpleasant aspects of his own case to Ralph's mental vision.

Was Mrs. Devenant kind, courteous—nay, for her, gentle and even winning to him—only so long as he did not declare himself? If he asked for Hilda, would he at once take the guise of an enemy in those dark and sombre eyes that were so often laden with pain and brooding sadness, yet softened as they dwelt on him?

The present was so happy, with its constant meetings, its short partings, that had a sweetness all their own, and its precious interchange of thought and feeling, that he trembled to put things to the test, and of a lovely present make a troubled future.

Jeremy's gardens were by this time blushing with June's fair wealth of roses. The standards, like monster posies, lifted their flower-laden branches to the sun-bright sky; the little banksia dotted

the old gables with golden buttons, and the stately tea-rose bent her lovely head, faint with the perfume of her own sweet breath.

"My queen, my queen! you shall walk among the roses, with me by your side, with your dear hand in mine. All the world shall see that my love is deep and true, and that you are the rose of my life!"

Thus, to his own heart, raved our lover of a time that yet should be, as he gazed on the beauty of the home that was his own, and one day should be Hilda's too.

He even pitched upon the old cedar on the lawn—that veteran tree whose shade was purple and cool even on the hottest day—as a likely place wherein to lie at Hilda's feet, look into Hilda's eyes, and there linger till the prying stars came out and tried their best to peer through the thick branches at a mortal lover and his "dear, dear love."

The cedar could have told its story of human love and human longing already, as we know. Perhaps the spirit of the past—the spirit of that day in which Alicia had bidden a man wait and hope, even as Jacob served for Rachel in the days of old—lingered about it, filling Ralph's mind with happy fancies as he wandered by.

Life cannot be insipid—not a day of it can seem dreary or monotonous to the man who rises in the morning with the prospect of meeting, ere night shall once more shroud the world, the loving steadfast look of the woman who loves him. To such a one there must always be one hour in the twelve that is a note of gladness; one hour that shines hotly enough to brighten all the rest.

It was so with Ralph Stirling.

As he opened his eyes of a morning and heard the birds twittering in the thick ivy, he thought, "I shall see Hilda to-day." As he lay down to his rest at night he recalled the sweetness of the meeting that had been; the fairness of his love; the touch of her womanly hand; the maidenliness of her graceful bearing; the exquisite tones of the voice that seemed to sing to him alone of all the world:

"It is not—it cannot be laid aside,
It is not a thing to forget or hide."

Of all the songs, he loved that old song best. The first note of it made him fancy he stood there waiting for her, as he stood that golden Sunday in the sunshine till she came to him from under the tangle of the clematis, singing as she came.

That moment he had found the sacred and beautiful thing that never could be hidden away or forgotten—the woman who was fated to be the inspiration as well as the love of his life.

Was it not so in very truth? If he had longed to do well before, did he not long twice as ardently now to live his life to the highest level of which it was capable?

His wealth—that great wealth bequeathed to him by the father whom all men loved—was beautiful in his eyes, because through it he could lavish all things beautiful upon the woman he loved. But this was not its only value in his eyes—hardly even its greatest—since, to make a good and noble use of it seemed the only way of being really worthy of Hilda's love.

Was he not full of plans for the help and consolation of those who were less fortunate than himself? Had he not delighted in telling Hilda of these schemes—Utopian, may be—beautiful assuredly? Had she not delighted in listening? Should they not walk hand in hand through life, they two, loving and loved—not only by each other, but by the poor, the sorrowful, and the suffering? Theirs would be no idle useless lives; no lives sunk and sodden in selfish enjoyment of the luxury that wealth can give; but lives in which each would grow dearer and dearer to the other, as each inspired to higher, holier, nobler aims, and grander deeds!

Hilda was no woman to be a man's mere plaything, to sit at his feet and smile. No; her place was by his side, next his heart; one with all his aspirations; the tender gentle almoner of his charities, the life and soul of his ambitions.

Truly Ralph's was a fair dream; the airy castle that he had builded with his hands—a noble edifice! And yet, they say the course of true love never does run smooth. If this be so, and trouble is the child of truth, then was Ralph's love for Hilda true enough to beget trouble deep and dire.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LI. MR. PROSPER IS TAKEN ILL.

WHEN Harry Annesley returned from Cheltenham, which he did about the beginning of February, he was a very happy man. It may be said, indeed, that within his own heart he was more exalted than is fitting for a man mortal,—for a human creature who may be cut off from his joys to-morrow, or may have the very source of his joy turned into sorrow. He walked like a god, not showing it by his outward gesture, not declaring that it was so by any assumed grace or arrogant carriage of himself; but knowing within himself that that had happened down at Cheltenham which had all but divested him of humanity, and made a star of him. To no one else had it been given to have such feelings, such an assurance of heavenly bliss, together with the certainty that, under any circumstances, it must be altogether his own, for ever and ever. It was thus he thought of himself and what had happened to him. He had succeeded in getting himself kissed by a young woman.

Harry Annesley was in truth very proud of Florence, and altogether believed in her. He thought the better of himself because Florence loved him;—not with the vulgar self-applause of a man, who fancies himself to be a lady-killer, and therefore a grand sort of fellow; but as conceiving himself to be something better than he had hitherto believed, simply because he had won the heart of this one special girl. During that half-hour at Cheltenham she had so talked to him, had managed in her own pretty way so to express herself, as to make him understand that of all that

there was of her he was the only lord and master. "May God do so to me, and more also, if to the end I do not treat her, not only with all affection, but also with all delicacy of observance." It was thus that he spoke to himself of her, as he walked away from the door of Mrs. Mountjoy's house in Cheltenham.

From thence he went back to Buxton, and entered his father's house with all that halo of happiness shining round his heart. He did not say much about it, but his mother and his sisters felt that he was altered; and he understood their feelings when his mother said to him, after a day or two, that "it was a great shame" that they none of them knew his Florence.

"But you will have to know her,—well."

"That's of course; but it's a thousand pities that we should not be able to talk of her to you as of one whom we know already." Then he felt that they had, among them, all acknowledged her to be such as she was.

There came to the rectory some tidings of the meeting which had taken place at the Hall between his uncle and Miss Thoroughbung. It was Joe who brought to them the first account; and then further particulars leaked out among the servants of the two houses. Matthew was very discreet; but even Matthew must have spoken a word or two. In the first place there came the news that Mr. Prosper's anger against his nephew was hotter than ever. "Mr. Harry must have put his foot in it somehow." That had been Matthew's assurance, made with much sorrow to the housekeeper, or head-servant, at the rectory. And then Joe had declared that all the misfortunes which had attended Mr. Prosper's courtship had been attributed to Harry's evil influences. At first this could not but be a matter of

joke. Joe's stories as he told them were full of ridicule; and had no doubt come to him from Miss Thoroughbung, either directly or through some of the ladies at Buntingford. "It does seem that your aunt has been too many for him." This had been said by Molly, and had been uttered in the presence both of Joe Thoroughbung and of Harry.

"Why, yes," said Joe. "She has had him under the thong altogether; and has not found it difficult to flog him when she had got him by the hind leg." This idea had occurred to Joe from his remembrance of a peccant hound in the grasp of a tyrant whip. "It seems that he offered her money."

"I should hardly think that," said Harry, standing up for his uncle.

"She says so; and says that she declared that ten thousand pounds would be the very lowest sum. Of course she was laughing at him."

"Uncle Prosper doesn't like to be laughed at," said Molly.

"And she did not spare him," said Joe. And then she had by heart the whole story, how she had called him Peter, and how angry he had been at the appellation.

"Nobody calls him Peter except my mother," said Harry.

"I should not dream of calling him Uncle Peter," said Molly. "Do you mean to say that Miss Thoroughbung called him Peter? Where could she have got the courage." To this Joe replied that he believed his aunt had courage for anything under the sun. "I don't think that she ought to have called him Peter," continued Molly. "Of course after that there couldn't be a marriage."

"I don't quite see why not," said Joe. "I call you Molly, and I expect you to marry me."

"And I call you Joe, and I expect you to marry me; but we ain't quite the same."

"The squire of Buston," said Joe, "considers himself squire of Buston. I suppose that the old Queen of Heaven didn't call Jupiter Jove till they'd been married at any rate some centuries."

"Well done, Joe," said Harry.

"He'll become fellow of a college yet," said Molly.

"If you'll let me alone I will," said Joe. "But only conceive the kind of scene there must have been at the house up there, when Aunt Matty had forced her way in among your uncle's slippers and dressing-

gowns. I'd have given a five-pound note to have seen and heard it."

"I'd have given two if it had never occurred. He had written me a letter which I had taken as a pardon in full for all my offences. He had assured me that he had no intention of marrying, and had offered to give me back my old allowance. Now I am told that he has quarrelled with me again altogether, because of some light word as to me and my concerns spoken by this vivacious old aunt of yours. I wish your vivacious old aunt had remained at Buntingford."

"And we had wished that your vivacious old uncle had remained at Buston when he came love-making to Marmaduke Lodge."

"He was an old fool; and, among ourselves, always has been," said Molly, who on the occasion thought it incumbent upon her to take the Thoroughbung rather than the Prosper side of the quarrel.

But, in truth, this renewed quarrel between the Hall and the rectory was likely to prove extremely deleterious to Harry Annesley's interests. For his welfare depended not solely on the fact that he was at present heir presumptive to his uncle, nor yet on the small allowance of two hundred and fifty pounds made to him by his uncle, and capable of being withdrawn at any moment; but also on the fact, supposed to be known to all the world,—which was known to all the world before the affair in the streets with Mountjoy Scarborough,—that Harry was his uncle's heir. His position had been that of eldest son, and indeed that of only child to a man of acres and squire of a parish. He had been made to hope that this might be restored to him, and at this moment absolutely had in his pocket the cheque for sixty-two pounds ten which had been sent to him by his uncle's agent in payment of the quarter's income which had been stopped. But he also had a further letter written on the next day, telling him that he was not to expect any repetition of the payment. Under these circumstances, what should he do?

Two or three things occurred to him. But he resolved at last to keep the cheque without cashing it for some weeks, and then to write to his uncle when the fury of his wrath might be supposed to have passed by, offering to restore it. His uncle was undoubtedly a very silly man; but he was not one who could acknow-

ledge to himself that he had done an unjust act without suffering for it. At the present moment, while his wrath was hot, there would be no sense of contrition. His ears would still tingle with the sound of the laughter of which he had supposed himself to have been the subject at the rectory. But that sound in a few weeks might die away, and some feeling of the propriety of justice would come back upon the poor man's mind. Such was the state of things upon which Harry resolved to wait for a few weeks.

But in the meantime tidings came across from the Hall that Mr. Prosper was ill. He had remained in the house for two or three days after Miss Thoroughbung's visit. This had given rise to no especial remarks, because it was well known that Mr. Prosper was a man whose feelings were often too many for him. When he was annoyed it would be long before he would get the better of the annoyance; and during such periods he would remain silent and alone. There could be no question that Miss Thoroughbung had annoyed him most excessively. And Matthew had been aware that it would be better that he should abstain from all questions. He would take the daily newspaper into his master, and ask for orders as to the daily dinner, and that would be all. Mr. Prosper, when in a fairly good humour, would see the cook every morning, and would discuss with her the propriety of either roasting or boiling the fowl, and the expediency either of the pudding or the pie. His idiosyncrasies were well known, and the cook might always have her own way by recommending the contrary to that which she wanted,—because it was a point of honour with Mr. Prosper not to be led by his servants. But during these days he simply said, "Let me have dinner, and do not trouble me." This went on for a day or two without exciting much comment at the rectory. But when it went on beyond a day or two it was surmised that Mr. Prosper was ill.

At the end of a week he had not been seen outside the house, and then alarm began to be felt. The rumour had got abroad that he intended to go to Italy, and it was expected that he would start. But no sign came of his intended movements. Not a word more had been said to Matthew on the subject. He had been ordered to admit no visitor into the house at all, unless it were someone from the firm of Grey and Barry. From the moment in which

he had got rid of Miss Thoroughbung he had been subject to some dread lest she should return. Or if not she herself, she might, he thought, send Soames and Simpson or some denizen from the brewery. And he was conscious that not only all Buston but all Buntingford was aware of what he had attempted to do. Everyone whom he chanced to meet, would, as he thought, be talking of him, and therefore he feared to be seen by the eye of man, woman, or child. There was a self-consciousness about him which altogether overpowered him. That cook with whom he used to have the arguments about the boiled chicken was now an enemy, a domestic enemy, because he was sure that she talked about his projected marriage in the kitchen. He would not see his coachman or his groom, because some tidings would have reached them about that pair of ponies. Consequently he shut himself up altogether, and the disease became worse with him because of his seclusion.

And now from day to day, or, it may be more properly said, from hour to hour, news came across to the rectory of the poor squire's health. Matthew, to whom alone was given free intercourse with his master, became very gloomy. Mr. Prosper was no doubt gloomy, and the feeling was contagious. "I think he's going off his head; that's what I do think," he said in confidential intercourse with the cook. That conversation resulted in Matthew's walking across to the rectory, and asking advice from the rector; and in the rector paying a visit to the Hall. He had again consulted with his wife, and she had recommended him to endeavour to see her brother. "Of course, what we hear about his anger only comes from Joe, or through the servants. If he is angry what will it matter?"

"Not in the least to me," said the rector, "only I would not willingly trouble him."

"I would go," said the rector's wife, "only I know he would require me to agree with him about Harry. That, of course, I cannot do."

Then the rector walked across to the Hall, and sent up word by Matthew that he was there, and would be glad to see Mr. Prosper, if Mr. Prosper were disengaged. But Matthew after an interval of a quarter of an hour came back with merely a note. "I am not very well, and an interview at the present moment would only be depressing. But I would be glad to see my sister if she would come across

to-morrow at twelve o'clock. I think it would be well that I should see some one, and she is now the nearest.—P. P." Then there arose a great discussion at the rectory, as to what this note indicated. "She is now the nearest!" He might have so written had the doctor who attended him told him that death was imminent. Of course she was the nearest. What did the "now" mean? Was it not intended to signify that Harry had been his heir, and therefore the nearest; but that now he had been repudiated? But it was of course resolved that Mrs. Annesley should go to the Hall at the hour indicated on the morrow.

"Oh, yes; I'm up here; where else should I be,—unless you expected to find me in my bed?" It was thus that he answered his sister's first enquiry as to his condition.

"In bed? Oh, no! Why should anyone expect to find you in bed, Peter?"

"Never call me by that name again," he said, rising up from his chair, and standing erect, with one arm stretched out. She called him Peter, simply because it had been her custom so to do, during the period of nearly fifty years in which they had lived in the same parish as brother and sister. She could, therefore, only stare at him, and his tragic humour, as he stood there before her. "Though of course it is madness on my part to object to it! My godfather and godmother christened me Peter, and our father was Peter before me, and his father too was Peter Prosper. But that woman has made the name sound abominable in my ears."

"Miss Thoroughbung, you mean?"

"She came here, and so be-Petered me in my own house—nay, up in this very room—that I hardly knew whether I was on my head or my heels."

"I would not mind what she said. They all know that she is a little flighty."

"Nobody told me so. Why couldn't you let me know that she was flighty beforehand? I thought that she was a person whom it would have done to marry."

"If you will only think of it, Peter——" Here he shuddered visibly. "I beg your pardon, I will not call you so again. But it is unreasonable to blame us for not telling you about Miss Thoroughbung."

"Of course it is. I am unreasonable, I know it."

"Let us hope that it is all over now."

"Cart-ropes wouldn't drag me up to the hymeneal altar;—at least not with that woman."

"You have sent for me, Peter—I beg pardon. I was so glad when you sent. I would have come before, only I was afraid that you would be annoyed. Is there anything that we can do for you?"

"Nothing at all that you can do,—I fear."

"Somebody told us that you were thinking of going abroad." Here he shook his head. "I think it was Harry." Here he shook his head again and frowned. "Had you not some idea of going abroad?"

"That is all gone," he said solemnly.

"It would have enabled you to get over this disappointment without feeling it so acutely."

"I do feel it; but not exactly the disappointment. There I think I have been saved from a misfortune which would certainly have driven me mad. That woman's voice daily in my ear could have had no other effect. I have at any rate been saved from that."

"What is it then that troubles you?"

"Everybody knows that I intended it. All the county has heard of it. But yet was not my purpose a good one? Why should not a gentleman marry if he wants to leave his estate to his own son?"

"Of course he must marry before he can do that."

"Where was I to get a young lady—just outside of my own class? There was Miss Puffle. I did think of her. But just at the moment she went off with young Tazlehurst. That was another misfortune. Why should Miss Puffle have descended so low just before I had thought of her? And I couldn't marry quite a young girl. How could I expect such a one to live here with me at Buston where it is rather dull? When I looked about there was nobody except that horrid Miss Thoroughbung. You just look about and tell me if there was any one else. Of course my circle is circumscribed. I have been very careful whom I have admitted to my intimacy, and the result is that I know almost nobody. I may say that I was driven to ask Miss Thoroughbung."

"But why marry at all unless you're fond of somebody to be attached to?"

"Ah!"

"Why marry at all, I say. I ask the question knowing very well why you intended to do it."

"Then why do you ask?" he said angrily.

"Because it is so difficult to talk of Harry to you. Of course I cannot help feeling that you have injured him."

"It is he that has injured me. It is he that has brought me to this condition. Don't you know that you've all been laughing at me down at the rectory since this affair of that terrible woman?" While he paused for an answer to his question, Mrs. Annesley sat silent. "You know it is true. He and that man whom Molly means to marry, and the other girls, and their father and you, have all been laughing at me."

"I have never laughed."

"But the others?" And again he waited for a reply. But the no reply which came did as well as any other answer. There was the fact that he had been ridiculed by the very young man whom it was intended that he should support by his liberality. It was impossible to tell him that a man who had made himself so absurd must expect to be laughed at by his juniors. There was running through his mind an idea that very much was due to him from Harry; but there was also an idea that something too was due from him. There was present, even to him, a noble feeling that he should bear all the ignominy with which he was treated, and still be generous. But he had sworn to himself, and had sworn to Matthew, that he would never forgive his nephew. "Of course you all wish me to be out of the way?"

"Why do you say that?"

"Because it is true. How happy you would all be if I were dead, and Harry were living here in my place."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, I do. Of course you would all go into mourning, and there would be some grimace of sorrow among you for a few weeks, but the sorrow would soon be turned into joy. I shall not last long, and then his time will come. There! you may tell him that his allowance shall be continued in spite of all his laughing. It was for that purpose that I sent for you. And now you know it, you can go and leave me." Then Mrs. Annesley did go, and rejoiced them all up at the rectory by these latest tidings from the Hall. But now the feeling was, how could they show their gratitude and kindness to poor Uncle Prosper?

A DAY IN PERUGIA.

How stern it sits upon its pointed rock, the grim dark houses built terrace-wise on the Etruscan walls! A frowning old city, black with the stains of blood and war and

rapine, and heavy with the incense of human sacrifices!

The shadows fall upon a vast plain, a plain that smiles up at the sombre ramparts, rich in corn and wine and olive. If land and tree, and wall and roof, and winding sombre stair, and cankering dismal archway, and the long lines of deep sdrucchioli which slip beneath the feet, could speak an articulate language, that tongue would be Etruscan.

Not even the railroad, nor the gas—which shines out at night brilliant under the moon, crowning the old rock like sacrificial fires—can redeem Perugia from the dark past.

Nothing will take the furrows out of thy wrinkled brow, thou dread old city, chief among the twelve tribes of Etruria, so bloody in their deeds. As thou wert, so art thou now, hard as the effigies upon thy tombs, where even the common gestures of humanity—the drooping head, the powerless arm, the form recumbent in death—take a stern attitude, wherein mercy dwells not.

As I look forth over the varied lines of lofty Apennine and level flat, I see a gap between the distant hills. There lies Thrasymene, a fair and spacious lake, sleeping in silence under the autumn sun. Pastoral villages and fairy capes jut out upon its surface.

Alas! what memories! What carnage! Those vineyards on the other side at Ossaja, the village of Roman bones, where legions lay slain under their eagles! That dried-up rivulet that falls into the placid lake and is called Sanguinetto, or "the bloody stream," ever since that fatal day, so long ago, when Hannibal beat Flaminius!

The whole land reeks with the fumes of slaughter. The fair hand of Nature cannot wipe out the stain. There it will lurk unto the end of all things.

I mount a long, steep, winding road from the station, through groves and gardens, in many a curve, seated in a gaily-painted omnibus, a four-in-hand, with a driver who knows how to use the whip. The road, broad and smooth, zigzags upwards, and we reach the summit at a full gallop unconsciously; and just outside the gate and the grim protesting walls is the new Hotel Bruffani, overshadowed by acacias, its door hospitably open. Enter! You will not repent it. You will be well fed, well housed, and fairly spoken, at a price surprisingly minute; and you will enjoy—

an item not charged for in the bill—the grandest outlook eye can range over in the length and breadth of united Italy.

Outside, Perugia is as fiercely Etruscan as Cortona. Inside, provokingly Gothic, and when not Gothic, Roman. That grandest monument of Etruscan art, the Porta Augusta, where the Pelasgic blocks mount to the curve of the arch, is dominated by a Roman frontispiece and Latin inscription. Add to this a mediæval loggia on one side, and you behold the accumulated spite of centuries.

The Porta Marzia, cut in the city wall, is narrow, low, and cruel-looking. The eye starts back from those three projecting figures, leaning forward as with a curse, and the horses' heads on the strange flat pilasters, squeezed together as if for a sepulchral chamber where space is precious. Here also Imperial Rome flaunts itself in carved letters: "Colonia Vibia" and "Augusta Perusia," repeated like a brand-mark.

Inside, I look around and see nothing but mediæval façades, carved windows, arabesques, gurgoyles, and the nineteenth century in wide streets leading to palaces new as mushrooms. At this modern trifling, a righteous anger comes over me. I will turn my back and fly. But fate steps in and stops me—fate, in the form of a pale, hunger-pinched wretch, with a much-mended coat, once black, now fading into white—a cicerone who fell upon and captured me at the door of the Hotel Bruffani, whom I, indeed, dismissed curtly, like a dog, but who still followed me at a distance, with a respect nothing could move, and such a woebegone countenance, that at last I stopped, ashamed of my own rudeness.

It was the usual tale—a dead wife, sick children, a blind mother. Nobody came to Perugia; the direct line of rail to Rome was taken to Chiusi. M. Bruffani, the landlord, was very good—half kept him, and gave him clothes. Clothes, forsooth! Bruffani wore them himself thread-bare; and that hat! It must have served the little Bruffanis as a ball to roll up and down the hill. Hat, indeed! Worn and napless, and so large that, vainly seeking its centre of gravity, it rested on the bridge of his nose. I think it was that hat that conquered me—and the wildly-searching eyes.

Standing reflectively in the Municipal Piazza, before a brand-new prefecture, the

whiteness of which made my eyes ache, fate deemed the moment opportune to take up his parable.

"Signora," he said in a gentle voice, "permit me. Our Etruscan gates and walls speak for themselves. We have no annals of them except upon the tombs. But here," and he gave a sweep round with his eye, "I might assist the lady excellence if she would permit me. The churches—does not the excellence want to see the churches?"

"Yes; those with the works of Perugino. Otherwise I am disgusted. They have modernised Perugia."

My remark seemed to strike him with a new light. He started. Was the excellence to whom he had attached himself a lunatic? I am sure that was his thought. Then, seeing me smile, he laughed and understood.

"Ah, madame, you must not look for anything Etruscan in the streets. That would be—permit me to say—scarcely reasonable. But surely the cinque cento is our grandest national period."

"I am tired of cinque cento; it dogs me everywhere."

As I spoke, my eye fell on a marble fountain, much blackened by time, and surrounded by a multitude of graceful figures, some small, some large—supports to three separate basins, polygon in shape, raised upon marble steps, three sweetest interlacing nymphs curving the upper basin. My eyes fell on this masterpiece, I say, and I felt I was a sinner. How could I carp and grumble with such a piece of work before me?

Fate, eager for a day's wage, with his blind mother in his eye at home in some mildewed cellar, keenly watched my countenance.

"The excellent lady," he presently ventured, with a timid smile (an excellency who refused to fall down before cinque cento was such an anomaly), "may become reconciled. This fountain is so beautiful, done by Niccolo and Giovanni du Pisa in the tre cento."

"I know, I know; but what are centuries beside Pelasgic Gates?"

"Well, madame, I can show you these, anything you please."

"I won't see all the churches," I cried, waxing obstinate again. "Understand that I am no stranger. I have visited Perugia before."

At my vehemence he grew pale. But he only said very meekly:

"It will be my privilege to show madame what she pleases."

How could I resist him? Again his hat—now fallen a little on one side over his right ear—pleaded for him.

As a rule I hate cicerones. Why had he ever come?

The Gothic cathedral rises before me with bare unfinished walls. Originally it had been proposed to drape them, but after a dozen ranges or so, the architect had apparently got tired and left it. There remains nothing of ornament but some carved lancet windows and a sculptured porch.

Projecting on one side is an odd little pulpit too small for any but a priest to stand in.

Fate, catching my eye fixed on it, the plaques of *Opus Alexandrinum* work shining in the September sun, proceeded.

"Trifles which mark an era are interesting," he remarked; "also as local indications. No one addresses the people now from pulpits such as these, like Savonarola and San Bernadino di Siena, when he came from the *osservanza*. We have the senate and the parliament. The honourable deputies talk a great deal, but not in that familiar way. They would not condescend to reason with the people as the others did, and make their best speeches at the risk of being caught in a shower, or having half a sentence swept off by the wind. Ah me! these are other times. We have suffered for Rome and unity. No direct rail to Rome now."

Here Fate struck a sympathetic chord.

That emperor, who lamented having lost a day, should have had the loss aggravated by passing it at a railway-station—especially the station of Terontola, an utterly weary and impossible place on the lake of Thrasymentis, where I spent four weary hours yesterday, staring at vacancy, brown hills, and pigs, before I could come on to Perugia in a luggage train laden with iron.

"Beside that pulpit there," continued Fate cheerfully, pointing with a deplorably gloved finger, "you see the arcade. That is the loggia of Forte Braccio. He besieged Perugia in 1416, and became its tyrant. Under that loggia he sat and dispensed what was called justice. The excellency will have read of Forte Braccio in the *Inferno* of Dante."

I waived off poetical reminiscences, always unfortunate in the mouth of a cicerone, and asked what was remarkable in the gaunt bare-walled cathedral.

"A fine painting by Baroccio."

"Pass that by," said I. "What else?"

"The wedding-ring of the Virgin."

"Ah," cried I, "I will go in to see the wedding-ring."

"Ah, but you can't, madame. The ring has its own altar, and is kept in a box locked with fourteen locks. There is a silver cloud before it, on the altar. Twice a year the cloud descends by pulleys, the locks are opened, and the box——"

"What do you see then?"

"An onyx ring, black, and very small. But," excusingly, "madame knows these are *cose di pietà*. The lower orders believe it."

Heavens! Did this poor Fate contemplate a lower order than himself?

To appreciate Vannucci Perugino and his school, you must come to Perugia. Like Raphael at the Vatican, Titian in Venice, Velasquez at Madrid, he is only to be understood on the walls of his adopted city.

And not Perugino only, but his excellent master, Bonfigli, a practical kind of Perugino without his spiritualised conceptions. Also Perugino's school, exclusive of the divine Raffael, an eclectic, who becomes much less divine after visiting Perugia and observing how much he owes to the good man Vannucci his master.

And the school still lives in Perugia. Someone said the genuineness of a melody consisted in being ground on barrel-organs at street-corners. Now there is a tailor's shop opposite in which neither cloth nor raiment are exposed to view. Only a white blind drawn, on which is painted by some bold young hand a charming group of angels with curly heads, and interlacing arms, in a free reading of the master.

I see hardly a ceiling that is not worthy of attention by reason of its arabesques, its spiral quaintness, and interminable wealth of interlacing lines, medallions, and figure groups.

It is quite pleasant to lie in bed in the morning at the Hotel Bruffani and study the attitudes of infant gods, graces, and muses glowing in the early sunshine, which will insist, spite of shutter and blind, in penetrating into the room.

I believe the first strokes of Perugian babies are in arabesque, a manner as much rooted here as the Etruscan walls. The place is full of graceful nothings executed by commonest artisans for a few lire, but the like not to be reproduced in Paris or London without the costly brush of a practised artist.

The wall-painter can no more tell you how he works, than can the butcher there, who cuts a sweet-smelling young bay-tree, and plants it in a tub to ornament his doorway. Nor the sausage-maker, his neighbour, who twines tall lilies round his wares, among sweet herbs, and wreaths of eglantine. It is instinct.

It is not for me to celebrate the heavenly beauty of the masterpieces in the Sala di Cambio. Nor do I care to tell the rapture which came over me in visiting them twenty years after my first view. These are things which live immortal, and burst on one like the glories of the sunset, or the ocean. Yet how cruelly have the beautiful frescoes suffered! How worn, and faded, and stained they are.

Too late the stupid municipality found that wind and dust, and damp from open doors, iron-barred windows, the greasy shoulders of money-lenders, and smearing of dirty hands and greasy fingers, were not adapted to improve soft and subtle shadings and transparent tintings.

Too late they drove out the money-changers and bankers, the roving dogs, the errant cats. The harm was done. Cato and Camillus, the seven planets, Apollo, Venus, Jupiter, and Mars, quaintly mixed up with the Nativity and Transfiguration, had felt the vulgar touch.

The adjoining chapel, by reason of its sanctity, shines out as brilliant as though it had been painted yesterday; the light from the arched windows plays upon colours caught as from rainbows.

In the Sala di Cambio, Perugino works upon stucco, here on tavola. His scholars too are present, so that one can appreciate the vitality of the school.

Raffael was but one among many—the lucky one with that pale poetic face—who went to Rome and was favoured by Popes and Kings. The others, Mami, Alfani, La Spagna, and Pinturicchio, worked their way upwards without golden ladders; but Mami and Alfani, at Perugia (they are unknown elsewhere), tread hard on the heels of the divine.

There are a pair of sybils in an arch by Mami nobler than those by Raffael in the church of St. Maria del Popolo, at Rome. Indeed, one sees that Raffael condescended to borrow from his fellow students—at a safe distance—as he borrowed from the ancients in the classic frescoes of Titus's Baths.

All this I repeat to myself in the Pinacoteca, a disused church, used as a pleasant

art sanctuary; where virgins, pale and subdued, as if Perugino had not dared to retouch them, hang side by side with works of his stalwart pupils, who, less reverent than he, fling about brilliant tints in saints and prophets. Quaint old Bonfigli actually, with the Archangel Gabriel ruffled and petticoated, and flounced with wings, and the Virgin in her best gown, and that a gay one. Yet all so touching, so tender, one overlooks the monstrous anomaly, and loves the artist, who is so like the child!

The day is cold and stormy, a tramontana wind whistles fiercely round the corners of carved palaces, and a cloudy sky rests on gurgoyled roofs, where lion and griffin seem to hiss with rage.

Two o'clock, and I am just come from looking at the illustrated Cicero, in the municipal library, a lovely little book of the fourth century—one of the three oldest in existence—and the way that Andromeda with Perseus, and disreputable Ariadne, with Tegeo hovering over her, are mixed up with Scripture, is a wonder to behold. A little book no bigger than my hand, yet each page so occupying eye and brain, that one forgets what has gone before in the charm of what comes after. The civil librarian trusts me bodily with the treasure, to turn over on my knee, and gaze my fill at the fascinating little birds, perched on arabesques, running down the text; tiny brown squirrels, gambolling up and down capital letters; and the sweetest flowers, a complete collection of the flora of that day, now banished to cottage-borders—lilies, dog-rose, monkshood, and double daisies, exquisitely touched on the soft vellum.

Fresh from this precious book, and the fragrance of wild strawberries and autumn blackberries, for fruit was also upon the page, the desolation outside seems all the more appalling.

To get out of the roar of the wind I pass down flights of stairs to the Augustan arch with its vile Roman mountings, and reach a little square before the Antenori Palace—a friendly little square, where Boreas is silent. There I find three empty gigs drawn up in one corner, helplessly appealing to the confidence of the public, the shafts turned skywards; a big load of hay piled on a cart; and on the pavement many couples of cocks and hens, tied by the legs in a basket, suffering too great agony to cackle. With a glance at

the richly-carved front of the palace, frowning down defiance on all around, as a haughty belle gathers her robes in a ball-room, I enter a cavernous hall, mount a huge stair, knock at a dark door, opened by a smiling maid, and find myself in a lofty panelled chamber—one of a long, long suite of such extending in dusky perspectives—and am engulfed in a family circle, the centre figure a noble-looking man with a grand head, blind, but with so many auxiliary hands and eyes ready to help him that he almost forgets his infirmity. His wife, a typical Virtue, orders all things rightly, and two gipsy-faced daughters—one of whom might have served Pope for a model of Belinda.

What warmth in their clasping hands!
What melody in their voices!

Belinda has a thousand reproaches to make that I have been so long in coming, and G—— lays her hand on my arm, and looks into my face with two large plaintive eyes, an execution in them equal to a gun-battery.

"You need not speak, G——; I understand—and someone else understands also."

Yes, G—— need not be lip-eloquent, her eyes speak for her.

"Now you are here," cries motherly Virtue, "we will not let you go. I am mistress here, and exact obedience."

"No, no! Not go!" sounds in a general chorus, led by Roberto, with the delightful family smile, and that intense glance from under a pair of eyes, which one feels that many a woman has studied to her cost.

Then I am presented to Hugo, mighty with his pen, one of the brethren from that pleasant land of inland ports and moneyless citizens, which those abuse who have no passport to it; the land where Wit is king and Pathos his consort, Eloquence and Poetry ministers, and Humour, Invention, and Epigram, chief counsellors.

If I were to say there is much to see in Perugia I should tell a fib. There are one hundred churches, and of these not more than two merit a visit.

To make short work I will say that San Domenico has been ruthlessly modernised by Carlo Maderno—Bernini and his school are the scourge of ancient churches all over Italy—and San Pietro, jutting out on the castellated walls, over the boundless plain through which old Tiber flows—a dull dark church, with numbers of

valueless pictures, and one gem alone by Perugino in the sacristy—so little has San Pietro impressed me, that I only recall a door behind the grand altar, which the attendant monk, a Benedictine, flung open and disclosed a balcony overlapping the rock whence, like Moses on Sinai, I gazed on the promised land towards Rome.

Before me were the Umbrian mountains tier above tier, on which old Sol played antic tricks in carmine and cobalt, here a dash of yellow, there a blue-green sky upon which a premature star twinkled faintly, as if ashamed of rising before its time; the whole city of Assisi spread out on a hill-side terracing on arches, and oak-capped heights towards Narni and Foligno, sharp cut and sombre as from gazing down century after century on hideous sights of war and battle.

"I see," said the grave Benedictine who conducted me, with a smile, as he watched my earnest gaze, "the lady loves the works of nature better than those of art."

A mild reproof for the scant attention I had bestowed on the bad paintings which sent me outside, unenchanted, into a sycamore grove on an escarpment—a silent sunny nook, with formal paths of laurel, broken stone benches, empty of all but twittering sparrows; pebbles glistening like jewels in the sun, and a few pale roses waving drooping heads—already doomed, for the hand of frost had touched them.

There is an opera at Perugia, as set forth on the Etruscan walls, and I go with my friends on condition that I sit in the back of the box and have Hugo to talk to.

How my poor Fate and I fumbled up the long cordonate from the hotel to the theatre! We did it, spite of wind and darkness, made visible by far-off lamps, between which one might conveniently be murdered and flung down a yawning precipice, and no one the wiser—specially not the gendarmes, who always run the other way, not to "compromise" themselves with criminals.

Considering the weather, Fate had put himself into his shabbiest clothes—in his company I learned there are depths of seediness unknown to me before—and looked so disreputable that, as far as prudence would permit, I cut his acquaintance, walking alone, as though belonging to darkness and the night.

At the door of the theatre I was fain to acknowledge, such a stampede of citizens I never saw—so eager to purchase tickets, they could neither walk nor stand, nor

permit others. At last I reach box Number Eighteen, and find Madame Virtue and Belinda, so pretty with her curls and her bouquets, black mittens and rosy fingers. Hugo, winking slyly at me out of a corner, seemed troubled about his gloves. One he had succeeded in getting on, but the other was recalcitrant. I think it split up at last; he certainly never wore it, and was preoccupied and silent.

Dear Virtue, utterly untruthful, insisted on my sitting forward in the box, and when I reproached her, out of my corner, for her untruthfulness and said, "The mother of a family should more respect her word," replied by laughing.

It was better so, for Belinda in the front, a very queen of flowers, attracted so many bees and wasps, gnats and butterflies, in the shape of Perugian golden youths, I should certainly have been flattened against the wall, like a dummy in a pantomime.

Perhaps it was not really that black glove that engrossed Hugo so—the idea came to me in the course of the evening—seeing his useless conflicts with an ill-cut thumb. Certainly the more the golden youth abounded, the more obstinate his glove became. Instead of amusing me, as he had promised, not a word passed his lips. He gave a piercing glance now and then to the front, at Belinda, her wilful curls and bewildering mittens, and when the glove finally failed him, by "bursting up," requested permission to go out and smoke.

Ungrateful girl! I came to know after, that as a mere child Hugo had worshipped the ground she trod on, and that ever since she had worn "tails," and those long, confusing curls hanging about her head, he had declared his passion.

Alas! he got no encouragement. Belinda observed quite dryly: "Hugo was a dear good fellow, and that she liked him when he was gay, and made her laugh; but"—little puss!—"was not Hugo Roberto's friend? And she could not, now could she"—here a saucy glance from bright eyes, under a fringe of black tresses—"love all her brother's friends?"

So Belinda spoke, and so Hugo waited.

The opera was *La Fille de Madame Angot*. The poor singers came from Arezzo, where they had done so little that they had been forced to leave their clothes and properties in pawn. They had made a pathetic appeal to the notabilities of Perugia, and the notabilities had res-

ponded. The properties had arrived, the debt been cancelled, and a full house the consequence.

The boxes regorgée'd, each presenting the aspect of a united happy family, down to the baby; the parents at the back, and so on, diminuendo to the front.

All the bravery of the city was upon their backs; pounds of false hair, and false flowers and feathers, forming a jumble incomprehensible on a human skull.

Where had they hidden themselves all day, these people? I asked myself. I never saw a creature in the streets, deserted even by cats, which, I presume, preferred the house-tops.

A bride was present, much discussed by the young men, who laid bets freely as to her beauty by daylight. Poor little soul! It came to her in the air, and she looked shy and indignant. Near her sat the general in command, a bronze statue to look at, wonderfully like the late king. Near the general sat the Sindaco, a dapper little man, wearing spectacles, talking incessantly, his hair brushed flat, a broad parting like a high road down his head. The generalissima too, a very gorgeous lady, who, as the Sindaco took his place in her box, bowing low, to pay her a visit, seemed to resign herself in a well-bred way to silence and boredom.

And now the time is come for me to say farewell to Perugia. Fate led me to the station with a visage of blank woe, and there I found G—— and Belinda waiting for me, the last quite in a confusion of prettiness, the sun glinting on her like a picture. Hugo was also wearing his natural countenance. He had her to himself to-day, and was happy.

Moral:

Live at Bruffani's excellent hotel, submit to "Fate," avoid the opera and the churches with nothing inside. Partake sparingly of the Middle Ages, ditto of Roman; study Etruscan "bits" and Etruscan gates. Take lovely Umbrian Nature to your heart, and you will not repent it.

· NOBODY'S CHILD.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"DONG—dong—dong!" It was the accustomed invitation of the chapel-bell to matins, but its mournful monotone, dulled by the low-lying clouds, had a tone of added melancholy that morning, as it rolled over the heath-clad hills, and lost itself in the vaporous distance.

"Chapel-time," said Padeen to himself, as the first wave of muffled sound swept up to his ears through the open window of the hayloft; "chapel-time, I'm so glad!" and then he started up, bright and warm and alert, from the nest he had made for himself among the dried grass and clover-blossoms, and looked round him with eyes as soft and clear and innocent as those of a little rabbit.

Padeen had been idling, but one can idle with a clear conscience when one's work is done, and that morning there was no laggard duty owing to the priest, or the pony, or the priest's maid, or anyone.

"Sunday comes once a week for everybody," said Padeen thankfully, as he slid down the ladder that led through the trap-door into the stable, and stood on his bare brown feet looking out at the sullenly falling rain.

Sunday for every one, the rest day, the day of peace, when they could lift their bowed shoulders and smooth their troubled faces, and fold their hard hands, finding happiness in just so little.

Padeen loved the Sunday always, but most when he thought of old friends. For himself every day was a glad day now, since the priest had found him and altered the whole face of existence for him. But the priest could not find everyone in the big, hungry, over-filled world, and so hundreds were still in what had been his evil case of not understanding anything beautiful, and not hoping for or expecting it.

Padeen worshipped the priest, not knowing that idolatry is sin. How could he help it? Like embodied love and power and patience the father had come to him in the slough of his dull, hopeless, animal existence, and had lifted him up and taught him that work need not be all toil, and that life need not be all pain.

Padeen had not known that till he had known Father James, nor anything save that men were very close to the beasts; that they were born like them anyhow; that they suffered like them uncomplainingly; that they died like them after a time, and were swept aside and forgotten like the withered leaves.

He was only a little Irish boy, nobody's child, just a waif dropped at Hughie Mahony's cottage door one spring morning, two years after Hughie's sister, pretty, ignorant, warm-hearted Norah, had gone away in a pet to better herself and never to return, and he had been found there

and taken care of by Hughie, because Hughie had a good heart and half-a-dozen children of his own, and nothing to feed them but the uncertain produce of the potato-patch.

"Where Heaven sends mouths it always sends something to put into them," said long-legged, simple, sheepish Hughie, looking down on the foundling, and ignoring the intrusive memory of dear years, and spoiled harvests, and the "potato rot." "Throw him in among the others, Kitty; we'll never miss his bit." So Padeen sat on Kitty's lap with her own baby, and fared as the others fared, and grew big enough by-and-by to tend the pig or the goslings, or mind the babies that succeeded his contemporary.

He was happy enough, because no greater happiness smote him with a sense of contrast; and if life for him meant cold and hunger many a time, it also meant a game on the moors with the other boys, and running and laughter in the sunshine, and sometimes a seat by the bright peat-fire when Kitty was cheerful enough to tell them tales of Fortunatus, or Cinderella, or the golden parrot and the bunch of speaking leaves. Of course those golden moments were rare, and the privation and scarcely conscious pain were constant factors in his life; but then what of that, since they are so in all lives? Padeen was not a sentimentalist, and those clear, soft, soulless eyes of his saw distinctly enough that he was no worse off than his neighbours. He was nobody's child, but ties of kindred don't count for much where pockets are empty and hearts are warm, and Padeen knew thoroughly well that Kitty and Hughie saw no reason to distinguish him from any of their own sons.

And then he loved them, and was growing useful. Already he could carry as heavy a burden as Dan who was three years his senior, and he was far more patient and obedient when told to fetch and carry. But that was no great merit in Padeen, for he loved the free air and the grey-blue sky, and the long stretches of humid turf, and the billows of heath breaking here and there into a foam of pink and purple blossoms and surging up to the horizon; so that it was pleasure to quit the smoky, overcrowded cabin and flit over the earth with fleet bare feet, or sit under a cover of coarse sacking, among the tufts of rushes in the pasture-land, watching that the hornless cow did not wander into the

corn-patch or the potato-ridge, and dreaming his dreams as the rain fell.

Nothing could hinder him dreaming, for he had always that heritage of the future to enter upon. Like every other son of Adam he would attain maturity one day, for who ever thinks of death who is young? And maturity meant strength, and effort, and achievement of some sort. Yes, Padeen would grow up, and would find himself old enough and big enough to quit the home-nest, and to fly out into the great world, away, away, where towns were built and great factories roared, and steam and fire became the slaves of man. But of course Padeen would not see those for many a day. At first he would only do as Kitty's sons did; go to the nearest town at Michaelmas or Lady Day, and hire with some farmer living south, and follow him with his one homespun shirt in his small bundle, and so pass away from the moors for ever.

What he should do at first among the strangers who "had" no Irish he did not understand very well, but he knew he would have to work hard, minding the cattle and toiling in the harvest-field till he grew strong enough to drive the cart and guide the plough. And then he would be paid wages consisting of silver shillings and golden guineas maybe, and then—Padeen lost himself in undefined, magnificent speculations.

But he would be sorry leaving the glen, and Kitty, and Hughie; and Kitty would cry a little after him, as she had done after Denis and Brian and Mike. But she would be consoled by degrees, as she had been before; so that should he ever return to visit her, as Denis had done, bringing her the hoarded savings of two years, he would find himself half forgotten too, and would see that Kitty was constrained and uncomfortable in his presence, having learned to do without him.

Padeen sighed as he thought of this, drawing the sackcloth cover more closely over him, and hiding his face in the burden of rushes that he had cut for the cow's bedding that night. The cow was Padeen's pride and special charge, and the largest item in Hughie's growing wealth. It had been a happy day for all the Mahonys when that cow took its corner in the overcrowded cabin, and to Padeen the world seemed a warmer, brighter place when Molly's soft eyes met his and her fragrant breath fanned his cheek.

"Hi, boy! you should not sleep in the rain."

"I wasn't sleeping." He pushed the coarse cloth back from his face and sat erect, looking up at the stranger with his soft, frank gaze.

"What were you doing then?"

"Thinking."

"Thinking of what?"

"Of nothing."

"You could not think of nothing."

"Maybe not." Padeen was a little nonplussed. Of course the stranger must be right; a man like that, who looked so old and so young at the same time, and who "had" the Irish in such a pleasant though odd way, was sure to know everything. But it had really seemed to Padeen as if he had been thinking hard about nothing.

"Whose son are you?"

"Nobody's."

"Nobody's! How is that?"

"Hughie found me, and keeps me to tend things, till I'm big enough to hire."

"And when will that be?"

"Next year maybe."

"And Hughie is kind to you?"

"Oh yes."

"Does he teach you anything?"

"Oh yes; I can plait whips, and make baskets middling, and dig potatoes, and hold the rod at the corn-cutting."

"And can you read?"

"Read! no," with a soft laugh.

"Do you know who made you?"

"I wasn't made, I was found."

"Did you ever hear of God?"

"Oh aye; Hughie speaks of him when he has had the poteen and is mad."

"Do you know anything of the blessed Jesus?"

"Yes; he's in Kitty's box. She says her rosary to him when she has time."

"Then I suppose you don't know about heaven, or the Holy Virgin, or the saints or angels?"

"No."

Padeen shook his head with a dejected consciousness of his own ignorance, and the young priest shook his too, sighing.

"What is your name?"

"Padeen."

"Then, Padeen, I shall come back to you before sundown, and we shall go together to your home, and I shall have a talk with Kitty and Hughie and the boys. I am the new priest, and you and I must get to know each other."

"Yes, sir." The child sat quite erect and motionless, and watched the stranger out of sight. That was a priest then, a man who wore whole clothes and had a

smooth clean face, and spoke the Irish in such a soft odd way, betraying, though not to Padeen's unpractised ears, that it was an acquired and not a native language. Padeen had heard about priests, and knew that Kitty had seen one, when she spoke gently to the boys and made brief futile efforts to tidy up, and had for a time a serener light in her eyes. He understood, too, that priests were good to the poor, and that they were somehow connected with the periodical booming of that far-away church-bell, but beyond that he knew nothing about them. Of course the old parish priest had visited Kitty and Hughie many a time, but Padeen had been at the moss, or with the goslings, or playing, perhaps, in the swamp among the rushes and yellow lily flowers, at these times, and so had always missed him. Thus it had happened that the ten-year-old little Irish boy, in the so-called priest-ridden land, had never seen one of the clergy of his own denomination.

CHAPTER II.

THE drizzling rain had become a down-pour that soaked the spongy meadows, lay in pools on the ill-kept highways, and dripped dismally from the few shrubs and bushes that sparsely dotted the landscape. The young priest shivered, as he drew his coat-collar higher round his ears and strode forward with swift steps that crushed heavily into the shrinking turf. Everything around him depressed him, and his heart lay in his bosom heavy as lead.

The heavy rain beat like tears against his pale face, and despair seemed to gather like a cloud around him. How was he to live his life through here? How was he to labour among hearts to whom hope seemed an impossibility? And yet they were so brave and enduring, the poor beings who were his charge; so thankful that things were not always at their worst; so hospitable with the scraps of oatcake or the cups of milk which were all they had to give; so patient from the beginning of their toilsome life till its close, when their dying eyes sought the figure of embodied patience on a cross, dying also; so simply trustful that there was a plan in life somehow, and that things would be equalised one day somewhere. The priest's breath came heavily as the wintry landscape surged before him. From his labouring breast an inarticulate cry was going up to Heaven, a prayer for power to strew a little sunshine on the desolate paths trodden by his fellow-men. And

yet what could he do? He had visited a score of houses that day where the same hopeless depression lay like a blight, where gloom, and dirt, and privation were factors of everyday existence, where birth meant pain, and maturity toil, and home a loveless partnership entered on as a matter of habit; where there were no books, no thoughts, no attainments, no rest save a little sitting by the threshold or the hearth, when the sun had set and it was too dark to work.

"The sum of their misfortunes breaks my heart, and what can I do but relieve a little in detail here and there as I am able?" the priest thought despairingly, and for the first time a covetous desire stretched itself out towards the flocks, and herds, and lands, and great possessions of some rich men he had known.

"To think of stayin' out in rain like that till ye're wet through; what's the manin' of it, ye bad child ye?" Kitty asked, lifting a hard hand threateningly towards Padeen's cold, red ears. "An' look at Molly, wid sthrames of water runnin' out of her, an' yerself drenched to the skin an' not a dry rag in the house to change wid."

Padeen went up to the hearth and stood there dejectedly, each chill foot covering the other alternately, and his teeth chattering a little, as stray gleams from the peat-fire caught him here and there, and made him feel how cold he was.

"He said he would be back by sundown, an' so I waited."

"Who said?"

"The priest."

"The new priest! Have ye seen him?"

Kitty's wrath was immediately changed to interest.

"Yes; he was goin' across the meadow to Jim Moriarty's, and he said he would be back by sundown, an' I could fetch him here to see you an' Hughie."

"An' so ye waited for him. Then, poor son, I won't scould any more. There, tie up Molly, an' by that time I'll have the fire alight an' ye can dhry yerself."

"An' what about the priest? Should I not go out an' wait for him yet?"

"Oh no, alannah, he'll know it was the rain dhruv ye indoors, an' if he asks where Kitty an' Hughie live any neighbour will tell him."

Kitty had never any difficulty in making things tidy or "reddin' up," as she called it; it was in keeping them tidy that all the difficulty lay. In a trice the kitchen floor

was swept and the flames were sending golden bars of light into remote corners, and Padeen, ensconced on a hob, had ceased to shiver.

"He'll come yet maybe," Kitty was saying in her own mind, "an', if not, a good fire on a night like this is no harm, anyway." To these poor untaught souls the priest's presence always brought a suggestion of a vague far-off betterness, and in the new priest's case there was a little natural curiosity added to the usual interest.

"Ye might tell us a tale, mother," Lanty, the eight-year-old, hazarded from his creepie in the corner. The unusual tidiness and stillness had a smack of Halloweve or Christmas about them, of festivity and good times of some sort, and Lanty knew nothing better than story-telling in the warmth.

Kitty smiled encouragingly. That entertainment cost nothing, and Kitty had a good heart.

"Maybe I'll tell the story of the blessed St. Andrew an' the sea serpent if yez is good boys till supper-time," she answered, with some lurking belief that the priest's approach involved tales on sacred subjects only. But Phil the youngest crept into his mother's lap and lay there gracefully as a young Bacchus, demanding, with a certain imperiousness born of the moment, that they should have the tale then and there, and that it should not be about any serpent, but about pretty Peggy, who was a good girl and married the prince, and after that wore a gold crown always, and had black-pudding for dinner every day. And Kitty laughed a rare laugh born of the moment too, and hugged her baby son to her heart with one of those instinctive movements that have a grace of their own, and began the oft-told tale of pretty Peggy's adventures and misadventures, while the circle of eager faces was lifted to hers as to that of one inspired. So the picture the priest saw when he raised the wooden latch and entered the hot, ill-ventilated room, was not without a certain homely attractiveness. In the corner Molly stood soberly chewing the cud and turning, now and then, a pair of soft, luminous eyes towards the group by the hearth; on the poles supporting the roof fowls roosted in rows, a faint guttural sound or a slight stirring of the wings giving occasional intimations of their wakefulness; while from the stone hob beside the ascending smoke-wreaths,

Padeen's wondering, dreamy gaze extended forward, past the firelight and the rosy faces fronting him, into the shadows and obscurity beyond. It was one of the happy moments that come even in the saddest lives, and the young priest falling on it reproached himself for his murmuring of the morning. In this one poor cabin there was that which but a little ago he had despaired of finding—time for rest and love.

"And it's his riverence sure enough through the rain and darkness." Kitty deposited her youngest hope on his bare feet, and rose curtsying and smiling. "If yer riverence would dhraw up to the fire and would be seated," offering him her own stool, "an' you, Padeen, get up an' give me the hob." Kitty sat down again on the duties of hospitality intent, but kept her arm round the child she had displaced with an instinct of timidity.

"And how are you again, my young friend?" The priest let his soft, sad glance rest a moment on the child's face.

"I waited till it was dark, sir," Padeen explained apologetically.

"Through all the rain? I am very sorry."

"You had said I was to wait," Padeen answered simply.

"And you had no thought but to obey. Do you know, Padeen, men become martyrs and heroes so?"

"It did not matter for him, so as he could hev' kep' Molly dhry. He's used to wettin's," Kitty interposed, determined to ignore the priest's acquired Irish and to show him that she knew a second language too.

Father James was a little startled. Did the child's comfort then really matter less than the cow's?

"Padeen is not your own son, I presume?" he said a little coldly.

Poor Kitty, who never had known any difference in her feelings towards one child or another, was quite unconscious of any implied rebuke.

"No, sorr, he's not me own," she answered cheerfully; "though thruth to tell, that niver enthers me mind but when some stranger asks it of me."

"And do you know whose child he is?"

"Yes, sorr." Kitty looked round at the circle of innocent listening faces furtively, before she remembered that she alone of all her household "had" the English. "Yes, sorr; there was Hughie's sister Norah, a pretty girl, but fooledge. She went away

two years afore we found him by the door."

"And you think he is her son?"

"Yes, sorr, I always thought so, an' lately he is growing like her."

"Do you know if she was married?"

"No, sorr, I'm feared not. You see if she had been, there would have been no need to steal back at night an' make a foundling of her child and steal away again."

"True." The young man stifled a sigh.

If Kitty's surmise were correct, then the dream he had dreamt that day, a dream that had come at the bidding of those soft, questioning child's eyes, was over. Nothing stained must be offered to the Church; he could not educate Padeen for the priesthood now. And yet he must do something for the boy. The child that was nobody's must be his care.

"I suppose Padeen will be hiring when he is older?"

"Yes, sorr," sighing.

"And he will go away and leave you and the neighbourhood, and will forget you?"

"Yes, sorr; there is no other way. They fly off like the young birds, when they are big enough." The woman's eyes, as soft and soulless as those of Molly in the corner, grew wet.

"Then had you not better let him come to me now? I need a smart little fellow to mind my pony, and to help Margaret, my servant; and I have taken a fancy to Padeen. If you entrust him to me I shall clothe him and take care of him, and teach him to read and write, and make a man of him."

"Oh, Padeen, did you hear?" Kitty was rosy as a girl with the shock of her surprise and pride. Living under the priest's roof was happiness in her eyes, and a kind of consecration. "The holy father will take you to live with him, and there will be no need to go away and forget us."

The child's face turned crimson, and then grew pale again. To live always with this beautiful stranger, to be always within call of Kitty and Hughie and the boys, to see Molly at times and have the purple crests of the hills always before his eyes, how beautiful that would be! Good fortune had come to him, without the need on his part of seeking it.

"Are you satisfied, Padeen, and will you come?"

"Yes."

"Say 'Yis, sorr, an' thank ye,'" Kitty admonished in a whisper.

"Yes, sir, and thank ye, and I'll serve ye faithfully," Padeen answered in his native Erse, with a sudden rush of tears dimming the brightness of his soft eyes.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. VI. THE GRAMMAR-SCHOOL—NEW STYLE.

THE retirement of Dr. Addlestrop from part or lot in all temporal things, as well as from the head-mastership of Christopher Sendall's Free School, did not make the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke any the less busy or expeditious in taking possession of his new abode. The very day after the doctor's funeral, furniture vans began to unload their contents at the school-house gate. A glance at these was enough to show that a complete transformation awaited the old rooms where formerly the eye could rest on nothing that was not of a tint softened and mellowed by age. The colours in the carpets and curtains, primary once perchance, had been subdued into secondary if not tertiary shades. The furniture, whether oak or mahogany, was solid and dark, and the pictures which had hung on the panelled walls were fine old engravings in black, carved frames. To go into the doctor's drawing-room on a hot summer's day, gave almost the same sensation as one feels in entering the cool scented darkness of an Italian church from the sweltering heat and blazing glare of the piazza outside.

In the matter of household furniture it was evident that the taste of Mr. Tulke ran on totally different lines. Brussels carpets, with scarlet flowers sprawling over an orange ground, covered the oaken floors. Coloured prints in florid gilt frames almost concealed the rich brown wainscot on the walls; and where the doctor's old book-cases and cabinets, his claw-legged tables and Chippendale chairs, used to stand, Mr. Tulke introduced a selection of furniture in the best style of the age—furniture forty years ago was not so pretty as it is now—which smelt very strong of French polish. The school-house was furnished thoroughly from top to bottom, the drawing-room being made especially resplendent, though Mr. Tulke was a bachelor, and it may have been from this circumstance that an opinion got abroad in Shillingbury that the school-house would not be long ungraced by a mistress.

On the first day of the next quarter Mr. Tulke was in his place presiding over a school of at least a score boys; for the

fathers of families at first believed that great things would come out of the new educational scheme, and the promises and professions of the new head-master himself rather tended to foster this belief. Mr. Tulke was a puffy, pasty-faced man of eight-and-thirty, or thereabouts, with pale washed-out blue eyes and straw-coloured hair and whiskers. The latter were carefully cut into inch-long streaks just in front of his ears, and taken in connection with his closely-shaven face and severe ecclesiastical garb, might have led one to think that Mr. Tulke belonged to what was then known as the Tractarian party in the Church. What his tenets at other times and in other places may have been we knew not, but it soon became manifest that Mr. Tulke, for the time being at least, was an adherent of the extreme evangelical party of which our then Bishop, the Hon. and Right Rev. James Charles Chitcham, was likewise an ornament.

Mr. Tulke was a man of great conversational powers. That is, he always insisted on doing all the talking himself; but as he rarely talked of anything or anyone except the head-master of the free school, his dissertations occasionally became a little tiresome. His ordinary manner of discourse could not have been more impressive had he been an archbishop, and he did not store up his impressive words and looks, and only bring them out in times of grave crisis. He would stop you and ask you whether you thought it was going to rain, or enquire how much you were paying for firewood, in a deep voice of tender melancholy which a prelate pronouncing the benediction, or a judge passing a death-sentence on a prisoner, might have envied. When he shook hands with you, his great clammy paw seemed as if it would incorporate your own luckless member into itself, so close, and moist, and prolonged was the handshake.

The beginning of the second quarter under the new dispensation saw a further increase in the number of the free-school boys. Mr. Rasker was a very good teacher in his own department; and, if Mr. Tulke knew all he was declared by his diploma to know, the five-and-twenty boys in our free-school were very well looked after. At the summer breaking-up there was a prize distribution, a thing the like of which had never before been thought of, accompanied by recitations by the more promising boys, and speeches from the rector, Mr. Winsor, a neighbouring squire,

who had taken Mr. Tulke particularly under his patronage, and from Mr. Tulke himself. The scholars recited, and the guests spoke as if they did not feel quite at home in their work, but this was not the case with Mr. Tulke. He had a certain position to establish in his speech, and he never lost sight of his point for a moment. This was to demonstrate to the company assembled what an exceedingly able man the new head-master was, and what a great educational work was that to which he had just put his hand.

Indeed, it really seemed as if the old school was about to awaken to a new life of usefulness. The boys were well taught, and taught, moreover, something which might help them on in the world. The stoutest defenders of Dr. Addlestrop, the most conservative sticklers for the sanctity of the founder's will, were fain to admit so much, and they admitted likewise that the new head-master was a very pushing, active man. To lift up the school from its low level, to be the Arnold of Christopher Sendall's foundation, would have been a task heavy enough for the ambition of most men; but it was not enough to satisfy the activity of the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke.

A man may sit in a school-room and teach boys from year's end to year's end for twenty years at a stretch, and still never be heard of ten miles away. He will have his reward—posthumous perhaps—in the fruit of patient work; but this was not the sort of reward Mr. Tulke wanted, and he knew, moreover, that the object of his desire was one which comes only to men who are instant in reminding the world of their existence by lifting up their voices on every opportunity. There was never a meeting of any sort at Shillingbury at which Mr. Tulke did not at the very least "say a few words." He was always ready to mount any pulpit at the shortest notice, and perhaps the happiest time in his whole week was Sunday evening, when the rector would, more often than not, ask him to preach the sermon in the parish church.

But an occasional appearance in the pulpit at Shillingbury would hardly serve to lift a man out of obscurity, if he should simply go on preaching after the manner of his fellow-divines. Mr. Tulke did not mean to go on thumping his brains to produce sermons for a Shillingbury congregation to listen to at seven, and forget at eight o'clock. He wanted to be talked about, and his name to be a word in men's

mouths. He was impatient for renown ; but he was wise enough to hold his peace till he should find a cause worthy of his eloquence, and after a year or so of waiting he found one.

Several years before the time of which I am writing the placid lake of Anglican theology had been rudely ruffled by the very big stone, to wit, Tract XC., which a certain reverend gentleman had cast into it. The extending ripples made a little stir even in those zealously preserved shallows which were under the care of that hon. and right reverend overlooker, James Charles Chitcham, D.D. Here and there a private patron had obtruded upon the parishioners young men who started services on saint's days, and preached in white surplices. The bishop's brow would grow very black whenever he might be called upon to license any such disguised wolves as these ; but though he was an honourable as well as a right reverend, he could hardly refuse to license a man because he proposed to work harder than his predecessor had worked.

In the course of time the vicarage of Bletherton, a village adjoining Shillingbury, became vacant. It was not one of the prizes of the Church. The income was one hundred and eighty pounds per annum, and the vicarage-house was little better than a cottage. It was in the gift of an Oxford college, and very naturally all the clerical fellows in turn declined to have anything to say to it. So the living of Bletherton for a time went begging ; but at last a chaplain named Laporte accepted it, and then began a state of things ecclesiastic very different to that which had prevailed during the long and tranquil pastorate of the Rev. Thomas Dormer, the late vicar.

Mr. Laporte began by two full services every Sunday and a weekly communion. Then, when Easter came, the church, bare and ruinous as it was, was prettily decorated. The next innovation was a harmonium, played by the vicar's sister, and a Sunday choir of small children, and finally, when the scanty congregation met on Whit Sunday, they found the communion-table resplendent with a new altar-cloth, an elaborate brass cross, and two tall candlesticks.

But all the new vicar's innovations were not in the way of ritual. He made excursions into the then not much worked field of elementary education, and here he raised up enemies who would probably

have tolerated as great an excess of ritual as the age was then ripe for. The farmers had already begun to see there was "a sight too much larnin' about," and so the cry against the new parson waxed loud and bitter.

Farmer Oldacre and Farmer Newton alike declared that the vicar taught worse popery in the school than he preached in the church, and from that time they both abjured their monthly spell of church-going, and slept through the fourth Sunday afternoon as they had hitherto always slept through the other three.

Ever since he had heard that an Oxford chaplain had been appointed to the vacant preferment, Mr. Tulke had been sniffing persistently for some stray whiff of Rome in the neighbourhood of Bletherton, and now, when he heard tidings of the popish practices said to be carried on there, he stood undecided, like a cat in a tripe-shop, as to which he should first pounce upon. But at any rate the time for speaking had come, and accordingly, on the first opportunity, he fired off a tremendous No Popery sermon from the Shillingbury pulpit, and wrote a scathing epistle to the local paper, sending a copy of the same to the evangelical organ in the metropolis. Mr. Tulke, though he was a man of wonderful erudition, was not apparently a liturgical scholar, and the week after his letters appeared, a swarm of wasps came about his ears, and "Anglicanus," "Oxonienensis," "An Anglo-Catholic," and many others, made sad havoc with both his facts and his reasoning. Still, the sermon had been preached, the first blow had been struck, and Mr. Tulke stood out as the Protestant champion, at least as far as Shillingbury and its neighbourhood were concerned. And it is certain that from his champion's hobby, the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke did come into close relations with many of the greater lights, whom he must have worshipped from a distance had he been content to confine all his energies to the education of the free boys.

The big man of Shillingbury was unquestionably Sir Thomas Kedgbury, of The Latimers. He was chairman of quarter sessions, and had once sat in parliament for a neighbouring borough. It was understood that Sir Thomas viewed with disapproval the growing assumptions of the priesthood, and it was possibly on this account that Mr. Tulke was asked to dine at The Latimers, and

requested to make what use he liked of the library there. But Sir Thomas, though a baronet, was not a wealthy man. Mr. Winsor, of Skitfield, had almost as many acres; and, much better, he had, besides, a share in a great London brewery. I do not know whether there is any connecting link between beer and evangelical thought, so I leave it to the student of sociology to decide how it was that the members of Mr. Winsor's firm were, all of them, as anxious to drive their fellow-men into churches of a certain stamp on Sundays, as they were to entice them on week-days into public-houses bearing the superscription "Winsor's Entire." If the beer Mr. Winsor brewed did in some instances act injuriously upon the bodies of his fellow Christians, his anxiety for souls was zealous and far reaching. He had dozens of livings in his gift, to which none but the most approved "Winsorians" were appointed. He spent thousands in evangelising the youth of Connemara, and in making moderately good Jews into indifferent Christians. The Church Association did not exist at this epoch; but if Mr. Winsor is still above ground he is, I do not doubt, one of its most open-handed supporters.

Of all the benefices in Mr. Winsor's gift the plum was undoubtedly Pudsey, and it happened that this became vacant about six months after Mr. Tulke had lifted up his voice against the Roman practices of a large party in the Church. Pudsey was worth about six hundred a year, and, as soon as men knew it was vacant, Mr. Winsor's post-bag was filled to bursting with letters of suggestion, recommendation, and application, for on a sudden the belief seemed to have got abroad that Pudsey, although the population was below four hundred, was one of the most important benefices in the county, and Mr. Winsor received warnings by the bushel of the evils which must come to religion if any but a right-minded man should be appointed to Pudsey, and suggestions by the score as to where such a right-minded man might be found.

The fortnight which followed was as anxious a one to many households as the days of the conclave used to be to the Cardinals' nephews and nieces. Mr. Winsor indeed had to institute a sort of a conclave of his own on account of the number and persistency of the personal applicants. At last he spoke. The matter was settled. The rectory of Pudsey was

offered to and accepted by the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke.

And then from many a parsonage there rose up a chorus of comment on the new appointment. Some sharp things were said of Mr. Winsor, and some very sharp things of the new rector. Who was he? Where did he come from? Mrs. Sanctuary's brother declared that he was the very double of a man he had seen preaching in a surplice in Devonshire. Then the bishop came in for a little playful satire because he had raised no difficulties about non-residence. The school-house was only half a mile farther from the church than the rectory was, and his "dear friend Winsor" had assured him that no harm should come to the rectory buildings. Some hints were dropped that this half-mile of distance would have been hard to span over, had not the new rector been a man after this bishop's own heart; that no assurances from his dear friend Winsor as to the conservation of the rectory-house would have induced him to allow the new incumbent to be non-resident, had the new incumbent not cried out so loud against the Bletherton atrocities.

So Mr. Tulke became rector of Pudsey, and scarcely was he instituted when Bishop Chitcham died, and another prelate came, who loved not Bishop Chitcham nor his works. He made rather a wry face over the tenure of Shillingbury School together with the rectory of Pudsey by Mr. Tulke, but he took no hostile steps thereanent, for he was a man of the world and knew quite well the mischief that Mr. Winsor could stir up should his coat be stroked the wrong way. Thus Mr. Tulke was left in peace over his new bit of good fortune.

And Mr. Tulke showed no sign of settling down into apathetic indolence now that he had become a "bloated pluralist." He started at once a fund for the restoration of his church, extracting subscriptions with much ingenuity from everybody who owned a stick or a square yard of property in the parish. He established the "Shillingbury Deanery Branch" of the Society for the Suppression of Praying-wheels in Thibet, and he became secretary and treasurer of the Diocesan Association for supplying Feeding-bottles to the Zenanas of our Indian Empire. He organised a crusade against the local benefit clubs which held their meetings in public-houses, and started a mutual self-help sick and annuity club, which was to abolish pauperism

and give every member a pension in his old age. Of this he also became treasurer.

Soon after he entered in possession of Pudsey rectory Mr. Tulke entered also the holy estate of matrimony. The lady he chose for a helpmeet was a certain Miss Small, who had lived with Mrs. Winsor as companion since the marriage of that lady's only daughter. It had commonly been supposed that Mr. Winsor would do something handsome for Miss Small whenever she might find a husband, and possibly Mr. Tulke may have shared this belief when he made offer of himself. If he had, he was doomed to be disappointed, for Mr. Winsor, thinking perhaps that he had done enough for the new ménage by the grant of the great tithes of Pudsey, gave Miss Small a wedding-breakfast and nothing else.

Matrimony worked a great change in Mr. Tulke's household arrangements and expenditure. Mrs. Tulke, as Miss Small, had undergone twelve years of seclusion; so, now that she had a home of her own, she let her husband see at once that, if he wanted to have any peace in his life, he must let her have a little of what he was fond of calling "worldly vanity" in hers. Mrs. Tulke had a smart phaeton, with a high-stepping horse and a groom in livery. Two of her sisters, of whose existence their brother-in-law had never heard till the week before the wedding, arrived at the rectory on a visit of indefinite length, and, during the year following his marriage, Mr. Tulke had to give more dinner-parties in the old school-house than Dr. Addlestrop had given in all the years of his tenure.

Perhaps, on the whole, Mr. Tulke was not more ungrateful to his patron than the recipients of bounty generally are, but sometimes, when he thought of that "something handsome" which had dangled like a bait before his eyes, he would cry out, in the bitterness of his heart, that he had been inveigled into matrimony under false pretences; and after a time, when he found his expenses more than doubled—there were two little beds in the nursery by this time—and his income at a standstill, he began to repent bitterly that he had not remained a bachelor. He was not a happy man, it was quite clear. He was no longer faultlessly shaven. The blackness of his broadcloth and the whiteness of his linen no longer set each other off by vivid contrast. Both the one and the other seemed striving to subdue their

former brilliancy into a dirty grey. The oily effusiveness of his manner was gone. He rarely "said a few words" on any platform now, but he was still ready, at all times and in all places, to collect the subscriptions to any of the various societies and funds whose bag-holder he was.

After a while, Mr. Tulke began to receive visits pretty frequently from a certain Mr. Gorgona, a dark gentleman from London, very smartly dressed and wearing a good deal of jewellery. Mr. Gorgona would sometimes stay the night, and it became a matter of remark amongst the school-boys that these visits did not tend to sweeten the head-master's temper. At last, one day, shortly after his yearly tithe audit and the receipt of his half-year's salary from the school-governors, he was called away on pressing business to London, leaving Mr. Rasker to look after the boys for a day or two.

For a second and a third day Mr. Rasker presided at the head-master's desk. A fourth and a fifth day passed, and there was no notice of Mr. Tulke's return. Indeed, no letter of any sort had come from him since his departure. At the end of a week Mrs. Tulke became very uneasy, and then there did come tidings of our truant head-master which caused such a panic in Shillingbury as probably had never been known there before. A writ and judgment against him at the suit of one Emanuel Davids came down; the furniture was seized and sold to satisfy the huge claim—two thousand pounds and more—of this voracious Hebrew; while the members of the Self-Help Club, and the subscribers to the various funds and societies whose cash the Rev. Onesiphorus had so kindly collected, began to feel a little uneasy and doubtful as to where their offerings might ultimately go, or to speculate whether they really would enjoy that pension in their declining days of which they had so fondly dreamed.

The fact was the man was a hopeless insolvent when he became a candidate for the head-mastership. The governors, it seemed, had allowed their eyes to be dazzled by one or two flashy testimonials, and neglected to make strict investigation as to their candidate's antecedents. He had begun life as an architect; but, finding that no one would employ him in building churches, he determined to make an effort to fill them. With a small legacy left him by an aunt he bought a proprietary chapel in London, and here began that connection

with Messrs. Gorgona and Davids which was destined to terminate so disastrously. When he came to Shillingbury he wanted money; more money was wanted when he became rector of Pudsey; and, of course, money could be only borrowed by a man in his position by paying for it pretty smartly.

After the crash it was discovered that he was heavily in debt to most of the Shillingbury tradesmen, and, of course, the living had to be sequestered. This was the most bitter pill of all for Mr. Winsor in his capacity of patron and evangelical light of the county. Some time before this the bishop had made overtures of peace towards him, but Mr. Winsor was not a man for compromise. The bishop had spoken words on the subject of the apostolic succession, which made him in Mr. Winsor's sight impossible as a fellow-labourer in the vineyard. So the episcopal overtures were declined with thanks. Now the bishop had his turn. He sent to Pudsey a young gentleman of the most advanced Anglican school to discharge the duties of the church during sequestration, and Mr. Winsor had the pleasure of knowing that from the pulpit, which he had destined to be the peculiar fount of evangelical truth, doctrines were preached which were little better than rank popery.

Mr. Tulke was never seen in Shillingbury again, and Mrs. Tulke and her two babies enjoyed a small pension from Mr. Winsor. From time to time stories came down to us how Mr. Tulke had been recognised as a steward on board an Atlantic steamer, and afterwards as collector of tolls on the pier of a fashionable watering-place; and one witness declared that, if a certain Richard the Third he had seen on the boards of an East End theatre was not the late headmaster of Shillingbury Free School, he was marvellously like him.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III. CHAPTER IV. AN OLD SONG.

RALPH STIRLING was no fool. The training his father had given him, the careful tutorage, together with much seeing of foreign lands and learning of foreign tongues, were indeed hardly likely to culminate in such a result. He possessed great store of knowledge of the world for

one so young. He knew his own world. He knew that that world would by no means clap its hands in frenzied applause if he married Hester Devenant's daughter.

As long as a man or woman who has risen in the world does nothing to make him or herself either conspicuous or disagreeable, the world is ready to be forgetful and complaisant enough. You do not remember that A's father stood behind his own counter and dealt out the family sugar in neat three-cornered parcels, until A, presuming upon his wealth and acquired equality, says or does something underbred that gets your back up. Then the three-cornered parcels pelt you like so many brickbats; and (though inclined to be theoretically and sentimentally Republican before) you suddenly become Conservative to the backbone, and are convinced that though "the man's the man for a' that," you infinitely prefer him when he bears the "guinea stamp" of culture and refinement.

The people of Becklington had accepted Hester Devenant as the mistress of the White House, as a woman who intruded herself nowhere, and, if eccentric, was assuredly nothing worse. Had Hester chosen to do so, she might have made her way among the local and smaller surrounding gentry of the neighbourhood. But she did not choose. She met advances with stubborn repulsion, and for that very reason did many persons of some position and vast curiosity long to know her. That which is unattainable has ever a charm all its own. Had Mrs. Devenant betrayed a wish to mingle with these persons, doubtless they would have dubbed her "pushing;" as it was they agreed to call her "peculiar," and her daughter Hilda, "interesting."

But once it should become known that the girl was to become the wife of the young squire of Dale End, things would take a changed complexion. It would be promptly and acridly called to mind that Hester Devenant was but a farmer's daughter; and that she had—in the days when she and Gabriel lived up among the dykes—been seen by more than one eye-witness to "whitestone her own doorstep."

People who, in the olden days, before M. Lemaire left all his worldly possessions to his niece Hilda, would have thought they were behaving "nicely" to Mrs. Devenant if they bid her the time of day as they passed her with her basket of frugal marketings upon her

arm, would now have been ready to receive her as, comparatively speaking, an equal. But, if it were convenient to do so, there could be no possible guarantee that they would not remember having so passed her many times and oft. It might promptly be suggested, too—under such circumstances—that she volunteered to nurse the old squire in his hour of need, with the crafty design of getting a “footing” in the house, and ultimately marrying Hilda to the young squire. That Ralph was, at that time, believed to be dead, would go for nothing, since, when people are spiteful, they are rarely, if ever, either logical or accurate.

Ralph knew that all these things might come to pass; but he believed himself to possess a strong ally in Lady Boscawen. It has been said that he regarded her as the best of women. With him best meant most generous. A lurking and rather comical fancy that she would find Hilda more easy to forgive, since pretty Ethel no longer adorned the parent nest, made him smile, as he mentally placed Ethel's mother in the position of Hilda's social godmother and warm-hearted ally. He counted, too—love is apt to make a man rather selfish—upon that halo of reflected tenderness that surrounded the living prototype of Lady Boscawen's dead son. And then Hilda would plead her own cause. Who could look upon her and not love her? Who could listen to the tones of the voice which, even when it was most glad, held a ring of sadness, and not be moved and won? It was impossible to see and know Hilda Devenant without recognizing the fact that her life had not been as that of other women. Self-repression, the habitual thought of another that pushes into the background every thought of self, these lessons that come to most women with middle age, with wifehood, motherhood, and the trials and struggles of life, had come to Hilda in the morning of her days. They had left their mark in ripeness and sweetness; but in sadness too. Hilda, then, was bound to win the heart of Lady Boscawen. She was destined to reign in the county, a fellow-queen with that best of women; her chosen friend, almost her adopted daughter. The part that Mrs. Devenant was to play in this blissful state of affairs was hardly defined. It was a sort of misty vacuum to be presently filled in by the hand of time.

One lovely afternoon, in the month that gives us just here and there a

touch of gold upon the trees, and a dash of red across the woods, Lady Boscawen, returning from a round of visits to various friends, pursued her lord into the smoking-room. Her face wore a look of portentous gravity, there was a line visible between her brows, and an injured droop at the corners of her mouth.

“Denby,” she said, sitting down on a desirably luxurious chair, but sitting bolt upright, as refusing to be cajoled by it, “I have been hearing things of Ralph.”

Now Sir Denby had been hearing things of Ralph for some time back, and had been keeping the said things from his spouse, lest she should be vexed by them.

Hence he displayed a guilty and crest-fallen demeanour as he met her severe gaze, and noticed that the hands with which she smoothed out her gloves upon her knee, trembled ever so slightly.

“You have already heard, then, that Ralph is doing that which is not fitting?” said Lady Boscawen magisterially. “Denby, I hate deceit!”

“I know you do, my dear,” said Denby uneasily; “but you see I thought they might be just silly rumours.”

“You should have told me. I could have sifted them.”

“What is there to prevent you sifting them now, my dear?”

“If all I have heard to-day be true, it is not a case of sifting the state of affairs, but of swallowing them whole——” Here Lady Boscawen gave a gulp, adding, with a pathetic sigh, “If one can!”

Sir Denby began to whistle softly to himself to pass the time away.

“It is most unfitting altogether,” said Lady Boscawen, hardly liking to put the unfitting thing in plainer words, “and you, Denby, are very heartless not to be more sympathetic.”

“Bless my soul!” replied Sir Denby; “I'm as sorry as anything, but I've seen this girl—Mrs. Devenant's daughter—and I'm bound to say she's a most fitting——”

“Wife for Ralph Stirling?” suggested Lady Boscawen with withering sarcasm.

“No, no; a most fitting person to turn a man's head—to make him ready to make a fool of himself, don't you know?”

“No, I do not know, Denby. It is only persons with ill-regulated minds who can understand such things, I should say.” Lady Boscawen looked as though her own mind were regulated to an inch as she spoke, rose, and quitted the room with crushing dignity.

But her heart, apparently, hardly kept pace with her mind, for before the evening was over, she began to wonder if it would ever be possible to forgive Ralph should he marry Hilda Devenant. Next she called to mind that some one had said that the girl had been educated in Paris. That was a point in her favour certainly.

"I have noticed the girl at church," she said to the penitent and conciliatory Sir Denby, late that night, "and I think—nay, I am sure—that with a little brushing up she might be—yes, really presentable. As to the mother, she is doubtless a designing person, and has thrown the young people together purposely."

Sir Denby thought of "Julia's second girl," but, like a wise man, held his peace.

Meanwhile, what of Hilda?

Never could any creature be imagined less conscious of the stir she was creating; never a gentle heart so lapped in its own blissful dreaming, to the utter exclusion of all sounds from the world beyond.

It was Hilda's habit to look upon herself in the light of a person vowed to one object in life, a sort of votary at the shrine of a self-elected saint. Assuredly Hester Devenant was no saint; yet to her service and worship was Hilda vowed. The girl had reasoned and dreamed herself into the conviction that this sacred office of hers was a legacy left to her by that father whose memory was still infinitely precious to her, whose words of love and soft caressing ways were as vividly remembered now as in the days when they were dear realities.

"Ma reine, ma petite reine!" How could Hilda forget those words? Were they not the last she ever heard spoken by "mon camarade's" lips—the loving valediction of a parting that was supreme? After that all was the coldness of death; the silence of the grave. After that mon camarade slept so soundly that he could not hear her calling, and when she touched him, he was cold as the ice in winter. Chilled by that awful contact, how glad she had been of the warm grey kitten nestling in her arms—even of the wilful beautiful sunbeam that would come stealing in through the chink of the curtained window! It all seemed so long, so long ago, and yet her father's love, and death, and loss had struck the key-note of Hilda's life.

He was gone, and she—little Hilda—his petite reine—must take care of "mothie." It would be difficult, perhaps, to trace the

mental process by which the desolate child got at this inversion of relationship. Perhaps the lack of care and tenderness for herself on Hester's part helped to bring it about. If she could not receive she would give. It has been said that even in her childhood certain memories had arisen to trouble her—memories of hard words dealt out to a sorrowing man; of the scourge pitilessly applied in such fashion, as that each stroke, in a time to come, took the semblance of a crime.

When haunted by such thoughts as these, a perfect passion of pity would shake Hilda's soul for that mother who was to her the centre of her life. The sense of restlessness, of an eternal seeking for something, which had oppressed her in her childish companionship with Hester, had long since explained itself to her as the spirit of a sleepless penitence and remorse for hard words upon which death had set his awful seal, making them things indelible. Even lack of love towards herself was tenderly interpreted as the result of an entire and absorbing love and regret given to the dead.

"Mothie's heart has no room for me," the girl used to say to herself, sad at her own isolation (yet never jealous of that other). "It is too full of sorrow for him."

Then came the sweetness of her friendship with Alicia Deane; the perfect companionship; the never-failing sympathy; all the still, tempered sunshine that women can shed upon each other's pathway in life if they will.

But shadows gathered, grew, closed in.

Hester became strange, silent, moody. Words to which Hilda could affix no meaning fell from her lips. In the night time she wandered from room to room; Hilda (her heart throbbing heavily with mingled fear and wonder) following her, a gentle wraith with wealth of nut-brown hair floating on its shoulders.

The squire was dead. Poor Davey had set sail for a distant shore with a bleeding heart in his breast, and Hilda's hand had dealt the wound. When the fond but hopeless love which Hester had fostered for her own ends came to be clothed in words, it found no echo in the loved one's heart; and Davey realised too late that he had built his house of hope upon the sands.

As if this was not sorrow enough to fall upon the fair head of Gabriel's daughter, a deeper grief was added. She saw that bitter estrangement had come about between her mother and Davey. More than

once the sound of raised and angry voices had made itself heard in the White House, and Hilda had to run, with her palms pressed to her ears, lest words not meant for her to hear should find their way to them.

It was a terrible time, and she was glad when Davey went away. Nothing is so painful to a true woman as to find herself loved in deed and in truth, when she has nought to give in exchange for such precious merchandise; and Hilda was the truest of women. She took to lying awake of nights and listening to the river, as with soft, swift rush it made for its haven in the sea. Falling asleep at last with its murmur in her ear, she would dream that someone was drowning in treacherous waters—and wake, to tremble and sigh at the fancied echo of a cry for help from among the toss and the turmoil of tumbling waves.

In addition to these nervous fancies, a terrible dread—a dread that more than once in her life already had glared upon her for a moment like some horrible mask from behind a curtain, seen for an instant and then hidden mercifully away—began to take a form more distinct and tangible than ever it had done before.

She grew afraid to leave her mother alone even for an hour. She gradually became her constant and unfailing shadow, and night and day she prayed with all her earnest heart that God would avert the thing she feared, or, failing this, make her wise to meet it.

Breaking in upon this strange, sad life of hers, this daily strife of fear, and watchfulness, and unrequited love, came the sudden news of "Master Ralph's" safety. Then Hilda knew that it was of him she had dreamed when she heard that cry for help ringing across the troubled sea, when she listened to the rushing of the river till it grew as the voice of many waters making haste to close over a boy's bright head.

She did not know why she did so, but on the evening of the day that brought such blessed news to Becklington, Hilda gathered a few sweet blossoms from the window-garden at the White House, and, in the grey gloom, hurrying to the grave of Geoffrey Stirling and his wife, laid them reverently down, there to give out their perfumed breath and die.

She stumbled as she left the churchyard, for her eyes were dim with tears; yet her heart sang, and the river, that night, seemed to sing too, as if it were

telling a brave story in rhyme to the listening night.

And so the years passed on, until that summer dawned that was to bring Ralph Stirling back to his desolate home.

Hilda had longed to go with the rest of the world to St. Mary's that glad Sunday morning. But Mrs. Devenant had one of her restless fits upon her. Nothing was right; everything was wrong.

Hilda, driven here and there by this whim or that, chid herself for a passing feeling of impatience, heard the bells pealing and clashing, and smiled to think how much happiness there was in the world, after all.

And at noontide of that blessed day, singing the old song that Miss Alicia had taught her in the olden days, she passed under the shadow of the clematis to find "Master Ralph" waiting for her, bare-headed in the sunshine.

She had thought of him as a tall stripling, with laughing dark eyes, and a winning grace of manner that made him different from his fellows. She found him a man, older in look by many a year than those that he had lived through, full of a grave and exquisite courtesy, showing the signs of having passed through much suffering, and of consequent powers of sympathy with the pain of others.

From that hour and day all the world was changed to Hilda. Not that her outward life changed one jot, save that it was cheered and beautified by his frequent presence; but all its trials were lightened, all its troubles became easier to bear. Even that great and terrible dread seemed to show a less threatening aspect, and at times it almost vanished out of sight.

Her mother was assuredly less fitful and depressed. True she never spoke of Ralph in his absence (a silence under which Hilda chafed not a little); but she smiled when he came, the old wondrous beauty dawning in her face, the old power of charm that had once won Davey's heart, making itself felt.

Hilda never stopped to ask herself if she loved this man, who had brought the fulness of summer into her heart as the sun had warmed the earth to bloom and beauty. Was she not vowed to the shrine of her saint? Could thoughts of self be permitted to intrude themselves between her and her life's work? No! But how beautiful was the world, this one year of all others!

Hilda drank in all the story of Ralph's plans and ambitions for the future with the eagerness of a child listening to a fairy-tale, adding little suggestions of her own here and there, such as made her listener long to kiss the lips that uttered them.

He thought he had never known the full meaning of the word "helpmeet" till now. He thought that he had never known the meaning of the word "life" till now—all the noble uses it might be put to, all the precious joys that it might bring.

The day had been hot and sultry, but towards sundown a little breeze sprang up, and came stealing among the flowers in the White House garden, stirring their sleepy heads gently as if to rally them from their long stupor. The harvest moon, together with her attendant star, hung above the pine-woods and the river; and the after-glow of the sunset shone bravely in the west, melting from amber to rose and from rose to blue.

A thrush was singing on a bough near the widely-opened casement that looked upon the river. Two people listened to his song.

Ralph and Hilda.

Hester had fallen asleep in the room across the house-place, for she was weary with the long hot hours of the day—weariness, too, with the beating in her brain that seemed to take the sound of mad, accusing words—words uttered over and over again, hard and pitiless as the strokes of a hammer on an anvil.

Hilda lay back in the corner of the low cushioned seat that ran round the window. Ralph stood leaning against the frame. Hilda watched the swelling speckled breast of the feathered songster. Ralph watched her. She wore a dress of pale daffodil, and at her throat was a posy of purple iris. A light as of deep content and joy unspeakable shone in her sweet serious eyes; a faint smile came and went about her lips.

"There—he has flown," said Ralph; "after bidding us such sweet good-night."

Had the bird's joyous song seemed to Hilda as the voice of her own heart, that she found no answer but a sigh?

"Am I to have no other song to-night?" asked Ralph.

"What you will."

"Then I will—the song I love best of all."

The colour deepened in Hilda's cheek; her bosom rose and fell as she crossed the room and took her place at the piano that stood in a deep recess.

"Must it really be that one?" she said, a new timidity holding her in its thrall.

"Really that one; that and no other."

A few soft minor chords followed each other in falling sequence, and then Hilda's voice—that clear sweet voice, whose deeper tones held the sadness of tears—began the song that Ralph loved to hear:

"Love is not a feeling to pass away,
Like the balmy breath of a summer day,
It is not—it cannot be—laid aside,
It is not a thing to forget or hide."

Never had that beautiful voice been so unmanageable. It trembled so sadly that at last the words of the song were hardly audible. It did not tremble less when Ralph's hand was laid upon her shoulder; it ceased altogether—how could it do otherwise?—when he drew her head back against his breast, and bent till his lips rested upon hers in the long first kiss of happy love.

"My darling," he whispered, when that kiss was ended, "is that our betrothal song?"

And Hilda, rising, came to his side, lifted her tender eyes to his, and answered:

"It is what you will."

Doubtless she had forgotten just then about the saint and the shrine, and the life vowed to one devotion. To say the truth she had forgotten all things in earth or heaven, save that Ralph Stirling stood there before her, her own, and not another's; her king whom she would gladly follow through the world—her lord, to whose behest she would at all times answer:

"It is what you will."

There was no room for any other thought in all her heart, save that. To give herself wholly, keeping nothing back; to love, even as she saw and felt she was beloved.

Nothing would content her less than the entire surrender, held in those tender, simple words:

"It is what you will."

She had had but little joy in her life, and now the greatest joy of all had come to her.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LII. MR. BARRY AGAIN.

"MR. BARRY has given me to understand that he means to come down to-morrow." This was said by Mr. Grey to his daughter.

"What does he want to come here for?"

"I suppose you know why he wants to come here?" Then the father was silent, and for some time Dolly remained silent also. "He is coming to ask you to consent to be his wife."

"Why do you let him come, papa?"

"I cannot hinder him. That in the first place. And then I don't want to prevent his coming."

"Oh, papa!"

"I do not want to prevent his coming. And I do not wish you now at this instant to pledge yourself to anything."

"I cannot but pledge myself."

"You can at any rate remain silent while I speak to you." There was a solemnity in his manner which almost awed her, so that she could only come nearer to him and sit close to him holding his hand in hers. "I wish you to hear what I have got to say to you, and to make no answer till you shall make it to-morrow to him, after having fully considered the whole matter. In the first place he is an honest and good man, and certainly will not ill-treat you."

"Is that so much?"

"It is a great deal as men go. It would be a great deal to me to be sure that I had left you in the hands of one, who is, of his nature, tender and affectionate."

"That is something; but not enough."

"And then he is a careful man, who will certainly screen you from all want; and he

is prudent, walking about the world with his eyes open,—much wider than your father has ever done." Here she only pressed his hand. "There is nothing to be said against him, except that something which you spotted at once when you said that he was not a gentleman. According to your ideas, and to mine, he is not quite a gentleman; but we are both fastidious."

"We must pay the penalty of our tastes in that respect."

"You are paying the penalty now by your present doubts. But it is not yet too late for you to get the better of it. Though I have acknowledged that he is not quite a gentleman, he is by no means the reverse. You are quite a lady."

"I hope so."

"But you are not particularly good-looking."

"Papa, you are not complimentary."

"My dear, I do not intend to be so. To me your face, such as it is, is the sweetest thing on earth to look upon."

"Oh, papa;—dear papa!" and she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"But having lived so long with me you have acquired my habits and thoughts, and have learnt to disregard utterly your outward appearance."

"I would be decent and clean and womanly."

"That is not enough to attract the eyes of men in general. But he has seen deeper than most men do."

"Into the value of the business, you mean," said she.

"No, Dolly; I will not have that. That is ill-natured, and as I believe altogether untrue. I think of Mr. Barry that he would not marry any girl for the sake of the business, unless he loved her."

"That is nonsense, papa. How can

Mr. Barry love me? Did he and I ever have five minutes of free conversation together?"

"Unless he meant to love would be nearer the mark; and knew that he could do so. You will be quite safe in his hands."

"Safe, papa!"

"So much for yourself; and now I must say a few words as to myself. You are not bound to marry him, or anyone else, to do me a good turn; but I think you are bound to remember what my feelings would be if on my death-bed I were leaving you quite alone in the world. As far as money is concerned, you would have enough for all your wants; but that is all that you would have. You have become so thoroughly my friend, that you have hardly another real friend in the world."

"That is my disposition."

"Yes; but I must guard against the ill-effects of that disposition. I know that if some man came the way whom you could in truth love, you would make the sweetest wife that ever a man possessed."

"Oh, papa, how you talk! No such man will come the way and there's an end of it."

"Mr. Barry has come the way. And as things go is deserving of your regard. My advice to you is to accept him. Now you will have twenty-four hours to think of that advice, and to think of your own future condition. How will life go with you if you should be left living in this house, all alone?"

"Why do you speak as though we were to be parted to-morrow?"

"To-morrow or next day," he said very solemnly. "The day will surely come before long. Mr. Barry may not be all that your fancy has imagined."

"Decidedly not."

"But he has those good qualities which your reason should appreciate. Think it over, my darling. And now we will say nothing more about Mr. Barry till he shall have been here and pleaded his own cause." Then there was not another word said on the subject between them, and on the next morning Mr. Grey went away to his chambers as usual.

Though she had strenuously opposed her father through the whole of the conversation above given, still as it had gone on, she had resolved to do as he would have her;—not indeed, that is, to marry this suitor, but to turn him over in her mind yet once again, and find out whether it would be possible that she should do so. She had dismissed him on that former

occasion, and had not since given a thought to him, except as to a nuisance of which she had so far ridded herself. Now the nuisance had come again, and she was to endeavour to ascertain how far she could accustom herself to its perpetual presence, without incurring perpetual misery. But it has to be acknowledged that she did not begin the enquiry in a fair frame of mind. She declared to herself that she would think about it all the night and all the morning without a prejudice, so that she might be able to accept him if she found it possible. But at the same time, there was present to her a high, black stone wall, at one side of which stood she herself while Mr. Barry was on the other. That there should be any clambering over that wall by either of them she felt to be quite impossible, though at the same time she acknowledged that a miracle might occur by which the wall would be removed.

So she began her thinking, and used all her father's arguments. Mr. Barry was honest and good, and would not ill-treat her. She knew nothing about him, but would take all that for granted as though it were gospel,—because her father had said so. And then it was to her a fact that she was by no means good-looking,—the meaning of which was that no other man would probably want her. Then she remembered her father's words,—“To me your face is the sweetest thing on earth to look upon.” This she did believe. Her plainness did not come against her there. Why should she rob her father of the one thing which to him was sweet in the world? And to her, her father was the one noble human being whom she had ever known. Why should she rob herself of his daily presence? Then she told herself,—as she had told him,—that she had never had five minutes' free conversation with Mr. Barry in her life. That certainly was no reason why free conversation should not be commenced. But then she did not believe that free conversation was within the capacity of Mr. Barry. It would never come, though she might be married to him for twenty years. He too might perhaps talk about his business; but there would be none of those considerations as to radical good or evil which made the nucleus of all such conversations with her father. There would be a flatness about it all which would make any such interchange of words impossible. It would be as though she had been married to a log of wood, or rather a beast of the field, as regarded

all sentiment. How much money would be coming to him? Now her father had never told her how much money was coming to him. There had been no allusion to that branch of the subject.

And then there came other thoughts as to that interior life which it would be her destiny to lead with Mr. Barry. Then came a black cloud upon her face as she sat thinking of it. "Never," at last she said, "never, never. He is very foolish not to know that it is impossible." The "he" of whom she then spoke was her father and not Mr. Barry. "If I have to be left alone, I shall not be the first. Others have been left alone before me. I shall at any rate be left alone." Then the wall became higher and more black than ever. And there was no coming of that miracle by which it was to be removed. It was clearer to her than ever that neither of them could climb it. "And after all," she said to herself, "to know that your husband is not a gentleman! Ought that not to be enough? Of course a woman has to pay for her fastidiousness. Like other luxuries, it is costly. But then, like other luxuries, it cannot be laid aside." So before that morning was gone she had made up her mind steadily that Mr. Barry should never be her lord and master.

How she could best make him understand that it was so,—so that she might be quickly rid of him? When the first hour of thinking was done after breakfast, it was that which filled her mind. She was sure that he would not take an answer easily and go. He would have been prepared by her father to persevere,—not by his absolute words, but by his mode of speaking. Her father would have given him to understand that she was still in doubt; and, therefore, might possibly be talked over. She must teach him at once, as well as she could, that such was not her character, and that she had come to a resolution which left him no chance. And she was guilty of one weakness which was almost unworthy of her. When the time came she changed her dress, and put on an old shabby frock, in which she was wont to call upon the Carrolls. Her best dresses were all kept for her father,—and, perhaps, accounted for that opinion, that to his eyes, her face was the sweetest thing on earth to look upon. As she sat there waiting for Mr. Barry, she certainly did look ten years older than her age.

In truth both Mr. Grey and Dolly had been somewhat mistaken in their reading

of Mr. Barry's character. There was more of intellect and merit in him than he had obtained credit for from either of them. He did care very much for the income of the business, and, perhaps, his first idea in looking for Dolly's hand, had been the probability that he would thus obtain the whole of that income for himself. But, while wanting money, he wanted also some of the good things which ought to accompany it. A superior intellect,—an intellect slightly superior to his own, of which he did not think meanly, a power of conversation, which he might imitate, and that fineness of thought which, he flattered himself, he might be able to achieve while living with the daughter of a gentleman,—these were the treasures which Mr. Barry hoped to gain by his marriage with Dorothy Grey. And there had been something in her personal appearance which, to his eyes, had not been distasteful. He did not think her face the sweetest thing in the world to look at, as her father had done; but he saw in it the index of that intellect which he had desired to obtain for himself. As for her dress, that, of course, should all be altered. He imagined that he could easily become so far master of his wife as to make her wear fine clothes without difficulty. But then, he did not know Dolly Grey.

He had studied deeply his manner of attacking her. He would be very humble at first, but after a while his humility should be discontinued, whether she accepted or rejected him. He knew well that it did not become a husband to be humble; and as regarded a lover he thought that humility was merely the outside gloss of love-making. He had been humble enough on the former occasion, and would begin now in the same strain. But, after a while, he would stir himself, and assume the manner of a man. "Miss Grey," he said as soon as they were alone, "you see that I have been as good as my word, and have come again." He had already observed her old frock and her mode of dressing up her hair, and had guessed the truth.

"I knew that you were to come, Mr. Barry."

"Your father has told you so."

"Yes."

"And he has spoken a good word in my favour?"

"Yes; he has."

"Which I trust will be effective."

"Not at all. He knows that it is the

only subject on which I cannot take his advice. I would burn my hand off for my father; but I cannot afford to give it to anyone at his instance. It must be exclusively my own,—unless someone should come very different from those who are likely to ask for it."

There was something, Mr. Barry thought, of offence in this, but he could not altogether throw off his humility as yet. "I quite admit the value of the treasure," he said.

"There need not be any nonsense between us, Mr. Barry. It has no special value to any one,—except to myself. But to myself I mean to keep it. At my father's instance I had thought over the proposition you have made me much more seriously than I had thought it possible that I should do."

"That is not flattering," he said.

"There is no need for flattery either on the one side or on the other. You had better take that as established. You have done me the honour of wishing for certain reasons that I should be your wife."

"The common reason,—that I love you."

"But I am not able to return the feeling, and do not therefore wish that you should be my husband. That sounds to be uncivil."

"Rather."

"But I say it in order to make you understand the exact truth. A woman cannot love a man because she feels for him even the most profound respect. She will often do so when there is neither respect or esteem. My father has so spoken of you to me, that I do esteem you; but that has no effect in touching my heart, therefore I cannot become your wife."

Now, as Mr. Barry thought, had come the time in which he must assert himself. "Miss Grey," he said, "you have probably a long life before you."

"Long or short it can make no difference."

"If I understood you aright, you are one who lives very much to yourself."

"To myself and my father."

"He is growing in years."

"So am I for the matter of that. We are all growing in years."

"Have you looked out for yourself and thought what manner of home yours will be when he shall have been dead and buried?" He paused, but she remained silent, and assumed a special cast of countenance, as though she might say a word if he pressed her, which it would be disagreeable for him to hear. "When he

has gone will you not be very solitary without a husband?"

"No doubt I shall."

"Had you not better accept one when one comes your way who is not, as he tells you, quite unworthy of you?"

"In spite of such worth solitude would be preferable."

"You certainly have a knack, Miss Grey, of making the most unpalatable assertions."

"I will make another more unpalatable. Solitude I could bear,—and death; but not such a marriage. You force me to tell you the whole truth because half a truth will not suffice."

"I have endeavoured to be at any rate civil to you," he said.

"And I have endeavoured to save you what trouble I could by being straightforward." Still he paused, sitting in his chair uneasily, but looking as though he had no intention of going. "If you will only take me at my word and have done with it!" Still he did not move. "I suppose there are young ladies who like this kind of thing; but I have become old enough to hate it. I have had very little experience of it, but it is odious to me. I can conceive nothing more disagreeable than to have to sit still and hear a gentleman declare that he wants to make me his wife, when I am quite sure that I do not intend to make him my husband."

"Then, Miss Grey," he said, rising from his chair suddenly, "I shall bid you adieu."

"Good-bye, Mr. Barry."

"Good-bye, Miss Grey. Farewell." And so he went.

"Oh, papa, we have had such a scene!" she said the moment she felt herself alone with her father.

"You have not accepted him?"

"Accepted him! Oh dear no. I am sure at this moment he is only thinking how he would cut my throat if he could get hold of me."

"You must have offended him then very greatly."

"Oh, mortally! I said everything I possibly could to offend him. But then he would have been here still had I not done so. There was no other way to get rid of him,—or indeed to make him believe that I was in earnest."

"I am sorry that you should have been so ungracious."

"Of course I am ungracious. But how can you stand bandying compliments with a man when it is your object to make him

know the very truth that is in you? It was your fault, papa. You ought to have understood how very impossible it is that I should marry Mr. Barry."

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

YORKSHIRE. PART III.

As we turn our backs upon romantic Craven and our faces to the clothing districts, the broad flank of the Chevin shutting out the view of pleasant Wharfedale, the last glimpse shows us Farnley Hall on a pleasant wooded slope, with the bright river below and a soft background of hills. This is the seat of the Fawkes family—of which the celebrated conspirator Guy is said to have been a cadet—but the hall itself, and its late proprietor, are better known in connection with Turner, who here found a home and a liberal patron, while he enriched the house with priceless treasures of his brush. Here among these Yorkshire hills and dales was his best studio. The light that never shone on sea or shore, here shone, to this arch-priest of his art, through the rain-clouds and mists of Craven and Richmond.

But here we are among the smoke of mills and forges—Cyclopean forges, where the blacksmith's hammer is represented by a twenty-ton Nasmyth, and the bit of iron to be hammered into shape takes the form of an armour-plate for a ship of war, or the cylinder of some huge engine; great sound of hammers and roar of furnaces, and belching forth of black vapours, as a turn in the road brings us into a once sweet vale where the River Aire winds about the venerable ruins of Kirkstall. Curiously changed in all surroundings since the days—about the middle of the twelfth century—when certain harmless anchorites, who had made for themselves a humble dwelling by the river were supplanted by a regular community of Cistercians. But even now you may realise the peaceful calm of the spot, where the river went rippling and swirling past to the sweet, slow chime of the convent bells.

But now we are among the comfortable villas of the wealthy burgesses of Leeds, and passing the Shiroak, a venerable stump, where the folk-motes of the district may once have been held, we come to Woodhouse Moor, with its more recent memories of political assemblies, and are now fairly in the metropolis of broadcloth.

We cannot stir far in the neighbourhood of Leeds without noting that the woollen industry has not the engrossing factory-working genius of the rival cotton manufacture. There are factories here, no doubt, where all the operations of cloth-making are carried out; but the more tender and clinging fibre of the wool makes it unsuitable for machinery driven at a high rate of speed. Hence, although the yarn is nearly all made by machinery, and the "spinsters and the knitters in the sun" have disappeared, a great quantity of weaving is still done in country houses and cottages, by small manufacturers, who often combine country occupations with their labour at the loom, and thus the prosperity resulting from the industry is more diffused, and there are not those startling contrasts in the rewards of labour that strike one in the cotton manufacture. The great magnates of the trade are of long established renown, rivalling the great families about in long assured position, and the names that strike us now as of leading and light in the community are much the same as those that struck our grandfathers ever so many years ago.

The manufacture itself is ancient, undoubtedly, and has flourished in Yorkshire from time immemorial. There is hardly sufficient ground for giving the Flemings all the credit of its introduction, although they came over in considerable quantities under the Norman kings, who found them probably more peaceable and more taxable than the native weavers. But one has a feeling that quite enough has been heard about the Flemings, who, perhaps, had something to learn as well as to teach when they came to England. So, perhaps, in ages to come, when a future race shall speculate as to the ways and manners of the nineteenth-century English, the wonderful coal and iron development of the period will be attributed to the Continental wars and revolutions that drove the artificers and engineers of Europe to the British Isles, where they taught the natives to make steam-engines, and railways, and iron ships!

An impalpable but sufficient boundary line divides the land of wool from the land of worsted—Leeds with its cloth from Bradford with its stuffs; the former noted in the steady demand for masculine garments; the latter at the head of all mixed fabrics, feminine and flighty, changing with the changing breath of fashion. As a rule, however, the scenery of the manufacturing

part of Yorkshire has a breeziness and openness of character, with a background of many pleasant resorts. Harrogate, for instance, with its breezy Stray and evil-smelling waters, and long lines of hotels, and crowds of visitors of a more sociable and gregarious nature than elsewhere. And Knaresborough, with its old castle and town perched on the steep hillside, and its dropping-well that works wonders in the petrifying way. Ripon, too, with its fine minster and quaint town, where the wake-man still blows a horn at nights as in Alfred's days. And who can forget Fountains Abbey in the midst of richness and verdure, the chief of all the beautifully-placed Cistercian houses in Yorkshire, of Rievaulx, and Jorevaulx, and Roche, and Meaux, with their foreign-sounding names, which kept up the memory of the sunny land of France, the mother country of them all, to say nothing of Sawley Byland and Kirkstall, more familiar and English.

On the verge of the manufacturing district, but still retaining its features of a quiet country town, is Pontefract.

Oh, Pomfret, Pomfret! oh, thou bloody prison,
Fatal and ominous to noble peers.

As one of the royal fortresses commanding the great highway to the north, Pontefract has always had its share in what might be stirring. Still is shown the Red Tower where Richard the Second was imprisoned and no doubt murdered, and a neighbouring mount retains the name of Saint Thomas, from the execution upon it of Thomas of Lancaster, in the reign of Edward the Second, popular affection having given him the titles of Saint and Martyr. The area of the castle, some seven acres, is, or was till lately, planted with liquorice, and Pomfret cakes are known all over the country; disappointing as cakes, and of a sickly medicinal property, but not without antiquarian interest. The castle stood two sieges for the royal cause in the civil wars, and owes its dismantled state to the general policy of Cromwell in demolishing all the feudal fortresses that were no longer defensible against regular siege operations, and yet that might be seized by armed bodies and form a nucleus for local risings.

One of the oldest of railway lines is that from Leeds to Selby, the second in the kingdom opened for passenger-traffic, in days when people would walk miles to have a look at passing trains, and all on the route turned out of their houses to stare and wonder. There is a pleasantly antiquated

air about the old line, and you travel in a leisurely way over the ground which was traversed by Black Tom Fairfax under such different circumstances lang syne.

Hardly are we clear of Leeds before Temple Newsome appears on the right with hanging woods that seem to languish in the smoke of the town—a preceptory of the Knights Templars, as the name indicates, afterwards the seat of the easily-consoled widow of Flodden James and her second husband the Earl of Lennox, and here their grandson Darnley was born, the hero of the Holyrood tragedy. A house this which with its royal connections and ancient history is the subject of legend and marvel in the district round.

A roadside station, Micklefield, further on, is the nearest to Towton Heath, and a breezy walk of four miles or so brings us to that famous battle-field. It is a ridge of high ground between the villages of Towton and Saxton, and commands a fine view of the immense vale watered by the rivers of York—a few inches of canvas in which appear homesteads, fields, and woods, ancestral halls, and distant spires, with a grand sky overhead, and cloud legions mustering as if for rehearsal of the grand battle. It must have been a wild bleak scene on that morning of Palm Sunday, 1461, with snow in the air and a portentous blackness in the sky. The Lancastrians had marched out from York, some thirty thousand strong, all the flower of the north, led by Somerset and Percy, while Edward, lately crowned the fourth of his name, led the men of the midlands and the south, little inferior in numbers. Clifford had fallen in a skirmish the day before the battle, so that Shakespeare is not historically accurate in representing him exchanging injurious words with Richard Crookback on the battle-field, but rightly shows the battle as fiercely fought, obstinate, and long doubtful.

With the word to begin the battle, snow began to fall, and the Lancastrians had the disadvantage of the wind and snow in their faces, and losing sight of the enemy in the gloom of the snow-fall, the first flights of arrows from their bowmen fell harmless to the ground. Towards night-fall the ranks of the Lancastrians began to give way, and soon the men-at-arms were pressing tumultuously to the rear, making for Tadcaster Bridge, where the river Wharfe might be crossed. The little rivulet, the Cock, that skirts the heath and falls into the Wharfe close by, with its sedgy slippery banks, intercepted the broken ranks;

and the brook was soon choked with the bodies of men in armour, and the swollen Wharfe, it is said, ran red with blood.

There are churches worth visiting about Towton, Bolton Percy, for instance, with a florid monument to Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax, the father of Black Tom, and the hero himself lies not far off at Bilborough, under a massive high tomb. But working back to Selby we find ourselves at a pleasant little river-port with some remains of monastic ruins and a fine church—the nave of the ancient abbey. The abbey at Selby was one of the two mitred abbeys in Yorkshire—St. Mary's, York, the other—whose abbots took their seat, of right, in the council of the nation among barons and prelates. Crossing the Ouse, we are soon among the marshy flats.

Lordlings there is in Yorkshire as I gesse,
A marsh countree called Holdernesse.

And this is it—not a very attractive region for tourists. And so the ruins of Wressel Castle, some five miles beyond Selby, may escape notice. It was built by Thomas Percy, Uncle Worcester of Shakespeare's Henry the Fourth; once a fine quadrangular structure, of which a solitary wing is left, thanks to Cromwell and the destructive tooth of fire.

Who would think of going to Hull unless bound for the sea? a busy thriving port, thoroughly modernised and transformed, with no vestiges of the fortifications that once made it the strong place of the north. And the people refuse to believe in anyone coming there out of curiosity. They want to know if your ship has warped in yet, or how deals are ruling just now. And you will be surprised to hear the most intensely English-looking people speaking some foreign tongue which sounds like English too, only you can't understand a word of it—that is, if you are not skilled in high and low Dutch, Danish, and Norse. But here you see how this port of the Humber is the great inlet of the Teutonic races, and how this has always been so with the river; whether the invaders were hostile or friendly. To this day, even, if there is any possible danger to menace us from the opposite coasts, it is the open defenceless Humber that will probably prove the gateway for our foes.

By the way, has anybody heard of Ravenspurn in this neighbourhood? It was a thriving port in the fourteenth century, with wharves and rich merchants, and all the trade of the Humber. Historically we know it as the landing-place of Bolingbroke

and Edward the Fourth, but the place itself has disappeared, utterly swallowed up by the sea. The site of it is said to be off Spurn Head, and perhaps under the sands still lie streets, and foundations, and relics of the ancient port, which the sea may one day perhaps restore, for the benefit of some future race.

Taking flight to Beverley, we are once more in the past. The beautiful minster—with its panelled western front, from whose towers it is said that Wren borrowed the designs for the upper stages of the towers of Westminster Abbey—the beautiful minster in the quaint and quiet town seems to shed an atmosphere of solemn tranquility about it. Here the Percy tomb is one of the great sights of the place. Here they lie, mail-clad warriors, gorgeous priests, fair dames, and stately courtiers. The greatest of the Percys are not here indeed, Hotspur and his father; their ashes scattered to the four winds. But this was long the great mausoleum of the family, and Leconfield Castle close by, of which there is nothing left but the moat, one of their favourite seats.

Of old, the great shrine of John of Beverley was one of the holy places of the north; an English saint, with such a thoroughly English heart, that people told how on the day of Agincourt, when Harry of England and his handful of men were fighting against the French host, the shrine was wet with tears of blood. There is something touching in the veneration of these rough Northumbrians for their own native saints—a veneration which must have had some justification originally in the lives of them—and no lazy saints either, but when the beacon-fires glowed on tower and peak, and the fierce Scots were hurrying through the land, out they must turn with the rest, banners, bows, and all, to lead the host that in fighting for hearth and altar fought all the more hopefully, thinking of the ghostly warriors who fought invisible on either hand.

One curious fact in the history of Beverley. The men of the town were implicated in Wat Tyler's rebellion, a movement which must have spread more widely throughout the country than history records.

At Beverley we are on the edge of the wold country, a land of centaurs and racing stables, with good galloping over the rolling chalk downs that stretch away to the coast, breaking off in the steep white cliffs of Flambro' Head. The coast is

more interesting than the interior. Bridlington, for instance, pleasantly and warmly placed under protecting cliffs. Here landed Queen Henrietta Maria, with the arms and munitions she had purchased with the proceeds of the Crown jewels in the Low Countries. And here was the gallant Cavendish waiting to receive her, while the ungallant Parliamentary admiral fired at her with his big guns.

And again, after some centuries had elapsed, the white cliffs echoed to hostile guns, as Paul Jones, the American, with his three ships engaged two English vessels of war. The whole population crowded to the cliffs to see the fight, which lasted for two hours under the bright rays of a September moon, when the English struck to the enemy; a scene of bitter mortification and dismay. The Northumberland militia were quartered in the town, and turned out under arms, but Paul was content with his victory, and sailed away with his prizes.

With Scarborough we have so much modern life and stir of the very latest fashion, that the history of the old castle on the rocky scaur or headland seems of but trifling interest in comparison with the historiettes and little romances which are daily being enacted on the sands below. Old Scarborough, like Bamborough, was a coast fortress of some importance to the invading swarms of Angles, Saxons, or Danes; but the Norman keep, which dates from the thirteenth century, has no very striking rôle in history, although it held out stoutly for the king in the civil wars, when the Roundheads turned the chancel of the parish church into a battery, and the Cavaliers knocked the same to pieces.

Following the coast to Whitby, we come to a complete change in scenery and surroundings. The chalk cliffs are replaced by stern limestone barriers, which come to a climax at Boulby Cliff, that rises six hundred and seventy-nine feet in a sheer precipice above the strand. A land well named—Cliffland, indeed, or Cleveland, as it seemed to the hardy Norsemen sighting it from the wild northern sea. The abbey of Whitby, on a cliff two hundred and fifty feet high, a noble object from the sea, was originally one of those curious mixed settlements of monks and nuns which remind one of Shaker communities and others of the same nature in America at the present day. Here too was held the great church council that "dished" the Scotch monks, and banished the missionaries of

Iona from the land. Popular affection clung to these old seats of English monasticism long after they had been transformed to the Norman pattern, and thus the fame of St. Hilda long lingered about the neighbourhood, her influence even extending to the feathered tribe.

They told how sea owls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail.

In the same way, at Beverley, bulls are daunted and tamed when taken into the churchyard

As for Whitby itself, a brisk port and bathing-place, it owes the beginning of its prosperity to the alum-pits, which began to be worked here in the seventeenth century. It is said that the first workmen were brought over from the Papal dominions; and that, so jealous was the Pope who then had the monopoly of the trade, that these men were smuggled out of Italy in barrels, and that, in his anger at being outwitted, his holiness excommunicated all concerned in the adventure. At a later period workmen were brought from Rochelle, French Protestants, no doubt, to whom the Pope's interdict would be no obstacle. The Whitby jet, which some have fancied to be picked up on the shore, is worked by drifting in the rock, as if it were so much coal.

But we are now upon the rather desolate hills, which have proved such mountains of wealth to their lucky possessors. The typical old woman of the north, with her apron full of stones, has now her apron full of gold. The grand mansions and luxurious villas of the iron-masters, planted in every romantic glen and sunny cove, testify to the rich reward that has fallen to enterprise and good fortune, although forty years ago the district was a desolate moorland and windy waste, with only a few scattered houses in the sheltered glens.

The existence of iron-stone in Cleveland had long been known, and it had been worked, perhaps, even before the days of the Romans. Rude smelting furnaces and heaps of scoræ are found among the hills, relics of the ancient metal-seekers, whose mystic doings may have been the origin of the tales of dwarfs and elves of the old folk-lore. But the beds hitherto worked had been thin and unprofitable.

When the iron age was fairly launched, and the demand for iron for all the great works then in progress was ill met by existing supplies, the hills of Cleveland were carefully explored by cannie iron-miners. One of these early explorers describes his feelings on coming across a bed of iron-stone,

a solid mass, four feet six inches thick. He was quite lost for a time in wonder and amazement, which, in the exuberance of the unbounded delight of youth, ended in a loud fit of laughter, a laugh which the gnomes and fairies of the hills must have echoed dismally. For their time was come. Soon sprang up blast furnaces and ironworks, and, upon a bare desolate moor that sloped down to the Tees, where one solitary farmhouse ruled the waste, a town sprang up as if by enchantment—a town that is not half a century old, and that now has its seventy thousand inhabitants, its public buildings, newspapers, theatres, and all the appliances of civilisation. But this Middlesborough-on-Tees, although an excellent place for business, does not invite an idle visit.

In the thick of the iron region is Guisborough, the original seat of the Bruces, whom even the Scotch have to acknowledge as a Yorkshire family of Norman origin. The priory, of which scattered ruins still remain, was founded by Robert, the first aspirant to the throne of Scotland, and his tomb, removed from the old priory, is to be found in the porch of the parish church.

But the pride of the countryside is Rosebury Topping, a solitary hill of conical shape; which was once known as Odin's berg, and was connected with the superstitions of the old Norse settlers. Here, with the berg as a coverlet, lies Odin in his enchanted sleep, awaiting the coming of Balder, or of anybody else who may have the luck to wake him. But strangely enough, the Danish name, after sticking to the mount for centuries, by degrees slipped out of use, and the old Anglo-Saxon name, Hreosnabeorh, little altered, came to the front again. And a quite different legend has been attached to it.

A princess, it is said, lived once upon a time at Osmotherly, a charming village lying under the Hambleton Hills, with the ruins of Mount Grace Priory, founded by Thomas Holland, son of beautiful Joan of Kent. Well, this charming princess, living in the charming village, had also a charming son, a perfect little boy. One night the princess had an evil dream—a warning or presentiment. Her darling boy was doomed to be drowned on the following day. Impressed with this evil boding she gave the boy in charge of a careful nurse, telling her to take the boy to the top of Rosebury Topping, there to stay till the sun went down. The nurse must have borrowed seven league boots, or likely

enough the whole family belonged to the race of giants who have left many traces about these parts—huge stones marked with the print of finger and thumb, which unimaginative people call erratic boulders. Anyhow, the good woman reached the top of the mountain safely with her boy, and sat her down to rest while the little prince played about the grassy summit. Presently his childish glee was hushed, but the nurse thought no harm till, waking from her nap, she missed him and eagerly called his name. But nothing was to be heard or seen of him, till she found him lying by a little spring, a few inches deep, that rises near the summit, but with his face in the water and quite dead.

All along the slopes of the Hambleton Hills it is all pleasant rambling, with many rare views of the great plain of York, with the minster perhaps shining forth in some gleam of sunlight, and the rich and varied plain with the purple hills of Richmondshire far away, especially charming in the sunset hour when the whole vast area perhaps is filled with glowing light and vapour.

Pleasant rambling, too, is there on the other side of these same slopes; down the course of the pretty little river Rye to Helmsley, a nice little town with a fine twelfth-century castle-keep crowning a height above—Helmsley, the scene of Wild Buckingham's revels.

And Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
Slides to a scrivener or a city knight.

And in a mean house in the neighbouring town of Kirkbymoorside, a house still in existence, mad Villiers died, "in the worst inn's worst room."

There victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this lord of useless thousands ends.

Then there is Rievaulx close by, with its fine ruins in a quiet spot, the abbey founded by Espec, one of the heroes of the Battle of the Standard, fought on Cowton Moor, near Northallerton, in 1138. Espec himself ended his days quietly in the monastery.

From Helmsley it is a fine walk to Pickering, which has a valley to itself, apart from all the other Yorkshire valleys, and lies between the Wold country and the iron-giving hills of Cleveland—passing Kirkdale on the way, with its famous bone cave, the bones all carried off and adorning various museums, so that one is content to know that there they were, a strange collection of wild beasts that would make the fortunes of any number of

Barnums of the present day—strange pachyderms, with wolves and bears, and here and there a lion-like creature that would cause a woeful panic among the racing-stables and stud-farms in the neighbourhood, if turned loose at this present day. The late Professor Philips was of opinion that at the time these bones were deposited, the Vale of Pickering was a freshwater lake, and the bone cave just on its margin. Then, some old inhabitants will assure you that it is all nonsense about bones of rhinoceros and hippopotamus, and that the relics are just the remains of Wade's cow.

Now Wade was a giant who kept house around these moors and has left his marks about the country, notably in the causeway which he made from Malton right across the country towards the sea. Wade had to make the causeway on account of his cow, which his wife was obliged to milk at a great distance on the moors, and as it was done for the good wife's convenience, she helped him all she could by bringing great quantities of stones in her apron. And here we pause for a moment. That old woman with her apron full of stones seems to haunt us. We met her in the wild fells of Northumberland, along the Roman Wall—a dim mysterious figure, only seen when darkness is gathering over the scene—and here she is again, hanging about the relics of Roman antiquity.

Roman! Not a bit of it. There were never any Romans in the parish. It is just the road that Wade made for his cow, and the rib of that cow is still to be seen in Mulgrave Castle—even allowing that the Kirkdale bones belonged to some other animal. And over there on the moors is to be seen a heap of stones—about twenty cart-loads—which the good wife let fall owing to the string of her apron breaking.

At Kirkdale, in the patched and ancient church, there is a relic of the old England before the Conquest which is almost unique—part of a sundial with an inscription recording its dedication in the reign of Edward, the king, and Tosti, the earl.

Pickering itself and Malton, new and old, are comely Yorkshire towns, a little grim in appearance, but kindly at the core, while the downs, with race-horses taking their gallops and scudding across even faster than the shadows of the clouds, give an enlivening sense of space and motion, while jockeys and stable-boys, in their sallow leanness, form a curious con-

trast to the florid burly men whom you can well imagine to have descent from the giant Wade. At Malton we are within half an hour of York again, and of express trains and the general movement of the modern world.

And now there is nothing more that time and space allow except a hasty glance at Doncaster, with its historic race-ground, where once resorted all the gay bloods and sparks of the county, Lascelles and Vavasour and Saville, with all the sporting gentry of the shire—and which of them was not?—with Gully, perhaps, the quondam publican, prize-fighter, and M.P. for Pontefract, and a host of ranting roaring fellows, all eager to back something for T' Coop or T' Leger. At race-times Doncaster is still a great resort of the tykes, though in other ways less of a local and more of a national gathering-place; but it is quiet enough now, and genteel in its quietude, not to say dull. Hatfield might be worth a visit, on the margin of Hatfield Chase, once a mixture of fen and lake, but reclaimed in the time of Charles the First by Vermuyden, and now under cultivation. There is a fine church here with a collection of ancient weapons and fragments which may be relics of the bloody battle that was fought here, when Cadwallon and his ally Penda, the heathen, slew Edwin of Northumbria.

On the way from Doncaster to Sheffield is Conisburgh—a royal seat, perhaps, in Saxon times; and, according to Scott, in Ivanhoe, the castle of the sluggish Athelstane, the scene of his funeral-feast and startling revival. And this brings us into the land of coal and iron, with Sheffield in the midst of its furnaces, vomiting smoke and flame, with pitchy waters that lie in beds of dust and ashes. And yet Sheffield is on the verge of a pleasant rural district. You have but to climb a hill, and chimneys give place to haystacks, and iron-works to ivy-covered manors. And Wharfedale is close by, with sweet romantic rocks and glens, once the home of Mary Wortley Montagu, and beyond is the wild mountain district of the Peak.

FLOWER STORIES.

THE Jesuit missionary, Camelli, returning to Spain from the Isle of Luzon, sought an audience of Queen Maria Theresa, and presented her with a mother-

of-pearl vase, in which grew a small shrub with glossy green leaves, bearing two flowers of dazzling whiteness. Plucking the fair bloom, she ran to the king's chamber, which he was pacing in one of his periodical fits of melancholy.

"Behold the new flower of the Philippines," she cried, as her husband welcomed her with a fond embrace; "I have kept the best for you, the other you shall present to-night to Rosalez, who plays so well in Cinna, at the Theatre del Principe."

Ferdinand pronounced the flower of which his wife was so enraptured to be "beautiful but scentless," but spite of the latter defect, the plant was assiduously cultivated in the hothouses of El Buen Retiro, and called after the giver, the camellia.

It may be only just to name a flower after its introducer, but the practice has the disadvantage of saddling very pretty things with very ugly names, and thereby shutting them out from sharing poetical honours with their more fortunate sisters, for there is everything in a name when rhyme and rhythm are concerned. The "soft cerulean hue" of the Mouse-ear Scorpion Grass would never have won poetic recognition if someone had not christened it forget-me-not. Who stood godfather history has not recorded, but tradition has it that a knight and his lady-love were interchanging sweet nothings on the banks of the Danube, when the fair one caught sight of some flowers on the other side of the river, so brightly blue, that she coveted their possession. A hint sufficed to send her lover plunging into the stream. He secured the flowers easily enough, but swimming back with them proved a more difficult matter. The current was too strong for him, and as it bore him past his despairing mistress, he flung the fatal flowers on the bank, exclaiming as he was swept to his doom, "Forget-me-not!"

And the lady fair of the knight so true,
Aye remembered his hapless lot;
And she cherished the flower of brilliant hue,
And braided her hair with the blossoms blue,
And she called it Forget-me-not.

The story of the origin of the forget-me-not's sentimental designation may have been in the mind of the Princess Marie of Baden, that winter day, when, strolling along the banks of the Rhine with her cousin, Louis Napoleon, she inveighed against the degeneracy of modern gallants, vowing they were incapable of emulating the

devotion to beauty that characterised the cavaliers of older time. As they lingered on the causeway-dykes, where the Neckar joins the Rhine, a sudden gust of wind carried away a flower from the hair of the princess and cast it into the rushing waters.

"There!" she exclaimed, "that would be an opportunity for a cavalier of the old days to show his devotion."

"That's a challenge, cousin," retorted Louis Napoleon, and in a second he was battling with the rough water. He disappeared and reappeared to disappear and reappear again and again, but at length reached the shore safe and sound, with his cousin's flower in his hand. "Take it, Marie," said he, as he shook himself; "but never again talk to me of your cavalier of the olden time."

The mignonette is not, like the rose and the lily, a flower of heraldic fame, but for all that it figures on the armoured shield of a noble Saxon house; and this is how it came to that honour. A Count of Walsthim was betrothed to Amelia de Nordbourg, a beautiful young heiress, as coquettish as she was beautiful, whose poor cousin Charlotte, an amiable girl of no great personal attractions, had been brought up with her from infancy, "as a companion and as a stimulus to her education." Returning one evening from a charitable call, the humble dependant found her aunt's salon full of guests, the ladies busily engaged choosing flowers, for which their respective admirers were expected to produce impromptu mottoes, and the companion was invited to follow the example of her betters. Amelia de Nordbourg had selected the queen of flowers as her emblem, her friends choosing such other floral favourites as were best calculated to elicit gallant flatteries; and perhaps it was as much from necessity as choice that Charlotte placed a spray of mignonette in the bosom of her dress. Noticing, as she did so, that her careless cousin was carrying on a violent flirtation with a dashing colonel, wilfully ignoring the manifest annoyance of the Count of Walsthim, and anxious to recall her to her allegiance, Charlotte asked the count what motto he had ready for the rose. Taking out his pencil he wrote: "Elle ne vit qu'un jour, et ne plait qu'un moment;" and then presented her with this motto for her own mignonette: "Ses qualités surpassent ses charmes." His froward fiancée took offence at the count's discrimination, and retaliated by treating him with studied

coldness, and flirting more furiously than ever with the cause of the quarrel—a method of treatment resulting in the count transferring his affections to the companion, and making her his wife, an event he commemorated by adding a spray of mignonette to the ancient arms of his family.

If bearing of arms obtained in India, the hero of a poem would assuredly have adopted the spikenard as his cognisance. Compelled to go upon his travels immediately after wedding the girl of his heart, he takes leave of her in his garden, and showing her a spikenard of his own planting, enjoins her to watch over it with loving care; for as long as it thrives all will go well with him, but should it wither some fatal misfortune will certainly befall him. Years pass away before he can turn his steps homewards. Then he assumes the garb of a mendicant, goes to his home, gains admission to the garden, and there sees his faithful wife weeping over the precious spikenard, grown into a mighty plant, telling its own tale, and the rest can be guessed.

A Pennsylvania farmer, gathering a violet while walking over his land, was curious enough to examine its formation, and was so interested by what he saw that he dreamed of violets that night, and became so desirous of making further acquaintance with the mysteries of plant life, that he studied Latin sufficiently to serve that end, and worked so hard at his hobby, that, before long, John Bertram was recognised as the greatest American botanist of his time. It is somewhat singular that the violet, universally held symbolical of modesty, should always have been in high favour with the French. St. Pierre heard one of his countrymen, sitting under a banana, in the Isle of France exclaim: "Oh, if I could but see one violet I should be happy!" The famous actress, Clairon, was so fond of the violet, that one of her worshippers took pains to cultivate it for her sake, and for thirty-seven years never failed to send her a bouquet of violets every morning during their season of bloom; an offering so greatly appreciated by its recipient, that she used to strip off the petals every evening, make an infusion of them, and drink it like tea. "Violet is for faithfulness," sings an old sonneteer. Was this the reason of Bonaparte choosing it? When about to depart for Elba he comforted his adherents by promising to return with the violets; and they, in remembrance of the promise,

adopted the flower as their badge; its political significance being so well understood that when Mademoiselle Mars appeared on the stage wearing violets on her dress, she was soundly hissed by the body-guard of King Louis; a demonstration leading to divers quarrels, and a great deal of "satisfaction" in the Bois de Boulogne. At St. Helena the discrowned warrior cultivated Josephine's favourite flower, and at his burial there, his coffin was covered with them; and the story goes that Eugénie signified her willingness to share the throne of France by appearing one evening wearing violets in her dress and hair, and carrying violets in her fair hands.

A once-famous Parisian florist, named Bachelier, having procured some rare anemones from the East, would not part with a root, either for love or money. For ten years he contrived to keep the treasures to himself, until a wily senator paid him a visit, and, walking round the garden, observed that the cherished anemones were in seed. Letting his robe fall upon the plants as if by accident, he so swept off a number of the little feathery seeds, which his servant, following close upon his heels, brushed off his master's robe and secretly appropriated, and before long the niggardly florist had the mortification of seeing his highly-prized "strain" in the possession of his neighbours and rivals.

The worthy of whom it is written:

A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,

would have found it something more had he come across its familiar blossoms in a strange land. The simplest flower has the faculty of putting strange memories in the head of the most unsentimental of individuals. Says a writer on prison life: "I have a remembrance of looking through the 'inspection' of a cell, and perceiving a prisoner, with her elbows on the table, staring at a common daisy, which she had plucked from the central patch of grass during her rounds—one of those rude, repulsive, yet not wholly bad prisoners, from whom no display of sentiment was anticipated. Yet the wistful look of that woman at her stolen prize was a gleam of as true sentiment as ever breathed in a poet's line. Six months afterwards, I saw that flower pressed between the leaves of her Bible—a little treasure I should not have had the heart to have taken away, had there been any laws of confiscation concerning daisies in the books."

When Sir Bernard Burke went to Derby-

shire to hunt up information respecting the family of Finderne, he sought in vain for their ancient hall; not a stone remained to tell where it stood. He entered the church; not a single record of a Finderne was there. He accosted a villager, in the hope of gleaning some stray traditions of the Findernes. "Findernes!" said the old man. "We have no Findernes here, but we have something that once belonged to them; we have Finderne's flowers." Leading Sir Bernard into a field still retaining faint traces of terrace and foundation, "There," said he, pointing to a bank of garden-flowers grown wild, "these are Finderne's flowers, brought by Sir Geoffrey from the Holy Land, and do what we will, they will never die."

Surely the crusader must have tended his flowers as lovingly as Landor, who would bend over them with a sort of worship, but rarely touched one, his care of them being so notorious that the Florentines aver that when, after a bad dinner, Landor pitched the cook out of window, while the man writhed on the ground with a broken leg, he ejaculated in horrified tones: "Good Heavens! I forgot the flowers!"

LOVE'S QUESTION.

"Do you weary of hearing me call on thee,
Do you weary of hearing my want and me?"
The lover asked, with a proud, sweet smile
Mocking his humble words the while.

"Does the fountain weary of hearing the thrill,
The ripples make as her basin they fill?"

Does the wild rose weary of feeling the heat,
Her dew-drenched petals are spread to meet,

"When the morning sunlight dazzles down,
Past the great storm cloud with its sullen frown;
Through the trees that burgeon overhead,
To keep the beams from her blooms?" she said.

And the lover laughed, as the happy may,
In the golden glory of youth's own day;
And sang to his lute, soft, sweet, and low,
"I want you, darling, I want you so."

NOBODY'S CHILD.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

"It's a wet day surely," Padeen said with a head-shake as he leant against the ladder that led down from the hayloft, and looked out at the falling rain. From the thatched spoutless eaves the water plashed heavily into the runnels it had worn in the earth; overhead the clouds tumbled sullenly in varying shades of leaden-grey; and in the centre of the yard the solitary sycamore twisted its stout branches, and rustled its yellowing leaves shudderingly.

"It's a wet day surely," Padeen said, and drew the little collar of his jacket

round his ears, and set off at full speed for the kitchen door which stood invitingly open, across the yard.

"Now then, making tracks with your wet feet all over my floor," Margit said, grumbling. "Where have you been all morning, and the father asking for you?"

"I was in the hayloft. Does his reverence want me still?"

"No, not now; I did all he needed when he was tired waiting for you. But come over and get warmed before you go into chapel."

It was long since Margit had known there was no good in scolding Padeen, for he never "turned the word with you," she was wont to say, and she knew, like everyone else, how uninteresting fault-finding becomes where no defence is made.

Padeen approached the fire obediently, and stood docilely in front of it, his small brown feet so round and dimpled on the hearthstone, and the fitful blaze flickering in his clear eyes. As Margit looked at him her hard face softened. He was a beautiful child, and beauty was not without its influence even on the elderly hunchback who was the priest's servant.

"There will be some of the old neighbours at mass to-day, Padeen."

"Yes, I know."

"But will they come out in spite of the weather?"

"There will be the blessed sacrament, you know, and Kitty never likes to miss that. Oh yes, I'm sure she'll come."

"If it was only not Sunday," Margit was saying to herself, "so that I could have a bowl of hot broth to give her! But then there would not be broth for all of them, and besides, Father James gives away far more than he can spare. There is the price of his winter coat gone this very day to buy firing for the Macmenamins." All her master's pecuniary affairs were known to Margit, and how the smallness of his income pinched him many a time because of the vastness of his benevolence—benevolence which she girded against often, for no demerit in the recipient ever hampered the freedom of the priest's giving.

"A copper, or a bite of bread to a poor body, is all very well," she would often mutter rebelliously when her fresh eggs and newly-churned butter and warm milk were set down freely to anyone, "but to leave ourselves in want, that all the trash that comes this way may fare like princes, it's just a sin and waste, though Heaven forgive me for offering to sit in judgment on his reverence."

Margit's repentant moods always followed closely on these angry soliloquies, and a sharp word to her master, or about him to her own heart, was invariably succeeded by greater zeal in his service. And truth to tell, Margit was not without cause of complaint, since all her diligence and economy had no result at the parsonage but in increased troops of mendicants who, as she said, would take the last morsel out of his reverence's mouth, and would pray for him while he starved, "just as if he could not pray better for himself, idle rubbish that they were!"

Plash went the rain heavily against the window-panes; puff came a great cloud of smoke backwards through the wide chimney; "Quack, quack," cried the ducks enthusiastically in the yard.

"Such weather, and the crops not saved yet!" Margit thought, sighing, while an inarticulate prayer rose up to the Lord of the harvest. The patches of wet potatoes, and the ridges of drooping corn, meant a year's sustenance to the whole countryside, and the woman knew what the loss of these involved for herself and her employer. The personal aspect of other people's losses touched her most keenly, as it does so many of us.

"Now then, Padeen, you'll be late for mass, if you keep idling there longer."

"Yes, I know." He stood reluctantly balancing himself, first on one foot, then on the other, not knowing what was amiss with him. For the first time in his life the bleak, chill little chapel had no attraction for him; for the first time in his life he would rather have remained by the bright fire, letting service go on without him. But that was cowardly and wicked of him, Padeen knew; the chapel was as cold for Father James as for him, and colder still for all the half-clad troops that, even now, were swarming towards it from hill and dale and moor.

"I'm going, Margit; good-bye." He buttoned his thin jacket across his chest with a consciousness of effort.

"Good-bye! What for good-bye? Sure I'm going with you, sonny," in some surprise.

"Aye, I had forgotten; but good-bye all the same." Then he rushed out into the rain.

Padeen was late, as he had been warned. Service had begun, and he slunk into a corner near the door with a feeling of merited disgrace. But Father James did not look at him, his eyes were with his

thoughts, far away, far above Padeen's knowledge, up in heaven, Padeen knew. The child dropped on his knees as he always did when the priest's face looked like that, and the wet oozing slowly over the flagged floor struck a chill into his blood. But he did not mind that; religion is sent to strengthen us against bodily discomfort, not to remove it, he knew; and the floor was as wet for the women and girls as for him. So he tried not to remember anything but that Father James was praying, though in spite of himself his thoughts were wandering.

What a pity that the chapel stood where it did in a hollow between two hills, and how unfortunate that it was over the river, for of course that kept it wet always, and chill, even in the brightest weather. But it had been necessary to put it just there when it was built, because of the persecutions. Padeen did not know very well what the persecutions were, but he had heard Kitty say that once it had been so hard to get a spot of ground for the site of God's house, that the poor folk who wished to worship, had chosen the bed of the river—which was no man's land—and there had reared their little church. And thus the stream sang beneath the altar week in, week out, and from its associations became sacred in the child's eyes.

Padeen was sure the river was a living thing, for in winter it changed and gloomed and frowned so, just as men do under misfortune, forgetting how it was almost consecrated, and how men thanked and praised it. Many a time he had seen it rush along with angry mutterings, chafing its red sides sullenly as though Nature had betrayed it in allowing grey skies to look down on it.

The river was in Padeen's thoughts all that day, although the priest's voice like muffled music was rolling into the farthest corner of the building, and although he was kneeling just in sight of the gold-crowned Virgin and the Child she held aloft.

"I am tired and angry, and I never rest," the river seemed to say as it struck at the foundations of the arch above it. "I always give and bear, receiving nothing, not even a sight of all the beautiful things men make and worship. But I shall rise—and go in—and ask——"

Padeen started and looked around him. Actually he had been almost asleep, though the priest was speaking. He straightened himself and clasped his rosary more tightly in his numb little hand, and

then he took a furtive survey of his neighbours. But they were all absorbed, kneeling, bent forward, some almost prostrate, as the priest raised the eucharist on high.

"To sleep in chapel," Padeen said, rubbing his eyes; "no wonder I dream foolish things and feel so cold." And then he started again with a sensation as if his dream were coming true and the river was disturbing his praying. He looked out into the aisle from his obscure corner, and saw that a tongue of water was forming a current down the middle, widening rapidly towards the benches and swirling more and more as it went.

"The river rising! Of course not; it's only the rain," Padeen said with a little gasp, as he dropped back into the kneeling posture from which he had half started. How silly he had been to think of raising an alarm that would have disturbed the priest at the altar, and the worshippers who knelt round it, and all because the morning was very wet! It was only the rain, he asserted confidently to himself, only the rain; yet all the while he watched, with wide-open eyes, the crawling snake of water that twisted itself towards him.

No one saw it but he, and he had only observed it because he had been wicked and had forgotten to pray. But was it rain after all? He had never seen it form itself into streams like that—never in all his life. Ought he to warn the priest and people, or ought he to be still? He was growing giddy with fear and doubt of what he ought to do. The altar seemed to sway before his eyes, but a cry he could no longer repress rose to his lips; but ere it was uttered it had mingled with other cries of question and amazement and terror:

"The river! Great God, the river!"

In an instant the service, the priest, the sacred edifice were forgotten, and nothing filled the little building but tumult, frenzy, and despair, as the audience took in the whole horror of its situation, and grew brutalised in its passion of fear; for the doors of the end aisles were closed, and that alone stood open which received the stream, thick now as a man's body, and effectually preventing all egress.

"Are we to drown here like rats in a sewer?" the men cried aloud, and the women wept, calling on Heaven and all the saints for deliverance.

"Open the end doors! There is no danger, friends, if you only try to help yourselves," the priest said calmly, divesting himself with nervous hands of his canonicals as

he spoke, and trying to make his way through the surging mass of humanity that struggled with and struck even at him.

"Will you not let me save you?" he cried in despair. "I can help you if you will only let me pass." But no one heard or understood him, for the water had risen to their waists, and was flowing in more and more swiftly.

To die here, where death wore its worst aspect, among maddened men who forgot to endure, and women who forgot to pray, was terrible! The priest shuddered and grew sick at the clamour of oaths and cries breaking what had been the sanctified silence of an hour ago. Was it his fault that religion showed itself such a weak and poor thing when tested by sudden calamity? Yet this form of death was particularly awful, and he knew it, because doing was impossible, and bearing was not allowed to show its heroic side.

"Padeen!" The thought of the child came to him like a ray of sunlight across a stormy sea.

"Yes, father." The sweet treble of the young voice rose clearly above the tumult.

"Are you near a door?"

"Yes."

"Then get it open, if there is anyone near you sane enough to help."

"Yes, father." There was an instant's hush and then a cry. The door had yielded, and men and women, half carried by the current, half struggling against it, were borne out shuddering, sobbing, praying, to safety. And Padeen stood unseen, hidden by the door, holding the vast iron stanchion that froze his fingers, and pressing his small chill feet against the cold stone floor, lest he should be washed away, keeping his ground manfully because he knew how many lives depended on his strength and endurance. How cruelly the icy current froze him; how treacherously the stream licked his limbs; how numb all his members were growing, though his head was still so calm and clear!

The throng was growing less, for the door opposite him had been opened in its turn, and Father James himself kept watch over it, and the crowd was growing orderly unconsciously, awed by the example of those two sentinels.

But still the water rose, pouring in rapidly by the wide front door, escaping more slowly by the narrower side portals. It had reached Padeen's breast now, it was rising towards his throat, and his numb fingers, still clutching the iron

bolt desperately, had forgotten how to feel. But he had no time to think of himself; he and the river were contending for men's lives, and the struggle was growing very close and merciless. The water was stronger than he, and very cruel; soon it would have risen to his lips, and then—then, and half the people still within the walls!

"Dear Christ! dear Virgin!" he thought, with wordless prayers directed towards the two pale, smiling figures at the altar. "If they see and are sorry they will help, I know," he said half aloud, and then—how it happened he could not have told—he was lifted from his feet, and the little hand he had stretched forth, in some instinctive last effort, was shut in between the closing door and the wall.

Those who had not seen him before saw him now, and strove to help him for his sake and their own—in vain. The water rose and rose, and men fought and struggled, and cursed around him, drowning in despair long after the flood had risen above the pathetic, patient lips and soft, dark eyes, long after the little crushed hand that had known how to labour but could never have learned to beg or steal, had lost sensation for ever.

And the darkness grew, and the rain fell, and the people died by tens and scores, and only when the water pressure by its own weight burst the doors outward, was escape possible again.

Padeen's door yielded last, and as the fierce current rushed out through it, the little body was lifted by it and rolled over and over like the plaything of its fierce sport, to be deposited many yards away—dead.

That evening, among the débris of the dismantled building weeping mourners sought the corpses of their lost ones, and Father James, aged years by that one day's experience, was there too, treading softly, because death and sacrifice had lent an added consecration to the holy ground.

"Who has seen Padeen? What has become of little Padeen?" he asked, while heavy tears chased each other over his pale cheeks. But no one answered. Who cared amid their own pain for nobody's child?

"Perhaps he has been spared, because he was so brave," he said, and then stopped smitten to the heart, for lying at his feet, with the white moonlight on his face, and his pretty mouth smiling as though death had no way affrighted him, was the child.

The priest dropped on his knees beside him, and, hiding his face, wept aloud. To

him this thing that had happened seemed as unaccountable as it was cruel. To his finite judgment the world seemed to need such men as Padeen would have made, such brave soldiers for life's battle-fields, such patient Levites at its temple-gates, such ready hands in its vast fields that were yellowing to harvest-time. And then he had loved the child with a warm human love, and a blow seemed struck at the very pulses of his being now.

Yet Heaven had only granted Padeen his heart's desire early. He had been allowed to help the valley people, had been allowed to show them that he loved them, and there had not been asked of him the long period of probation involved in growing up, before he was allowed to do some great thing.

RATS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

WILL the reader accept a few words on this much be-written topic from one who knows nothing whatever about rats scientifically, and whose observation of them has been limited to two rather exceptional conditions—the keeping of caged rats in great numbers for the purpose of feeding snakes, and the close companionship of wild ones by day and night during certain voyages in vessels that have literally swarmed with them? And do not be apprehensive that any anecdotes of "remarkable sagacity" are foreshadowed by this title. Rats know a thing or two, no doubt; perhaps they do lead their blind and aged relatives about with sticks in their mouths, as they have been said to do, though I should be more inclined to believe that they ate them. Or they may even carry off an egg in the manner alleged, by means of one embracing it, so as to secure it from breakage, while two others come and drag him away by the tail; but at any rate, my experience has included no such cases. White rats, though gentle and affectionate, are extremely stupid, and I never yet witnessed any proceeding on the part of their dusky brethren at liberty that has aroused my admiration sufficiently to make me hesitate for one moment to interrupt it with a boot, brush, or other immediately available missile.

First, as to tame rats. I am not here going to reopen a discussion as to the morality of choosing between allowing a serpent to kill its own food or starving it to death; suffice it to say that rats and

mice are largely used for this purpose, since they are tolerably cheap—dealers supply them half-grown for about three-and-sixpence or four shillings a dozen—more easily kept and bred than birds, and contain a larger amount of nutrient material in proportion to their size than guinea-pigs and rabbits, all of which, however, are given to hard feeders by way of varying their diet. When we speak of tame rats, we almost necessarily imply albinos. A common grey rat is certainly susceptible of being tamed, but it is a difficult job and not very satisfactory in its results at the best. White, piebald, and black ones—a genuine black rat is a very pretty animal—being bred in confinement are always quiet, and do not attack the snakes as wild ones would be apt to do. Nevertheless, many valuable reptiles have been destroyed even by white rats, generally from neglect to put food for the latter in the case with them. It seems an extraordinary thing to talk of a rat eating a live cobra or rattlesnake, but it has occurred over and over again. There is no malice in the deed; the animal finds what is apparently a long piece of meat, and being undismayed at a slight movement, or possibly so ravenous as to disregard it, it begins to feed; while it is a fact that the serpent may lie, feebly protesting only by a slight wriggle, and allow itself to be bitten until it is fatally injured. I have had a young rattlesnake killed by a white mouse and the greater part of its head devoured—all in about a quarter of an hour and in the presence of a biscuit—when the unhappy victim might have slain its aggressor with the rapidity of a lightning stroke. Two boas, also, lost an inch or more of their tails from a similar cause, but did not die. Now I always make a point of putting, not simply bread or biscuit, but some especial delicacy into the snakes' box along with the rats—a bit of lettuce or cheese, or, much better, a fresh-meat bone, in one corner. This keeps them actively employed for a long time, prevents them from teasing the snakes by running over them, and enables the latter to survey them and approach them quietly to within striking distance. Very often a serpent about to spring is thrown off his feed and frightened away by the rat running against his nose, or seizing his head inquisitively with its paws.

The same thing probably happens sometimes when both are in a state of freedom. A large anaconda got loose on board a ship and was not seen for over a fortnight. It

belonged to the boatswain, who kept it in a barrel on deck; one night it managed to force off the canvas with which the mouth was covered, and in the morning the barrel was found empty. Its owner, fearful of creating alarm and getting into trouble, declared that he had thrown the late tenant overboard; perhaps he really believed that it had slipped over the bulwarks, but there can be little doubt that he fervently hoped so, and that his secret feelings must have oppressed him considerably. The anaconda was roaming unseen below all the time, however, and was found and despatched down in the hold, with about fifteen inches of its tail mangled and nearly gone, and numerous rat-gnawed wounds about its body.

Conversely, I have made a snake become its own rat-trap. I was bringing home a large and very spiteful tree-boia which, for want of better accommodation, as all my cases were already tenanted, was confined in a big deal box, roughly fronted up with galvanised wire netting, of rather large mesh. That voyage I happened to have run short of white rats and pigeons, so I thought I would try my *Epicrates cenchris* with a grey one, as he had just shed and was miserably thin. Accordingly, I let one in, not without some misgivings, through the rude door at the back of the box, but I might have spared myself any anxiety on the subject, for it leaped across the snake, sailed gaily through the netting, and vanished as only a seafaring rat can vanish. I might have foreseen this inevitable contingency, but of course I had not done so; still it suggested to me a plan for providing the boia with food and at the same time diminishing the number of intruders which nightly visited my cabin, attracted by the hemp-seed, banana, and other eatables in various cages, and impervious to the allurements of traps. So I used every evening to put a little bit of fish inside the cage, a few inches from the wire, cover it with the hay, and leave it there; and in the morning would generally find traces of a scuffle, and a kind of swelling about half-way along the serpent. How many he caught, I don't know; I saw him with one and he got enough at any rate for one fair gorge. He was an artful customer, and grew to know the baited corner very soon, and would lie with his head close to it under the hay. Sometimes, however, I used to find the fish all gone without any evidence of a catch, and I think that in time the rats got to know

something about it, for at last the bait ceased to be disturbed.

White rats are albinos of the black variety, the genuine old British rodent, now practically exterminated by the larger Norwegian species which has taken its place so abundantly in our midst—"brought over in the Hanover ship," as the cruel satire, which the Laureate has perpetuated in *Maud*, had it. They cross better with the black than the grey, the piebalds being of a much more sprightly type than their white ancestors, and having black eyes, black heads as a rule, and a dark line down the back. The characteristic pink eyes of the albinos scarcely add to the charm of their personal appearance, but it seems rather strange to me that their beautiful, thick-furred, cream-white skins are not used in the manufacture of sundry fancy articles. Real black rats are glossy little creatures, much more inoffensive in their aspect and habits than their brown relations; they are to be bought of the dealers as pets, and are occasionally captured about the docks, obviously having been brought there in foreign-going ships. Indeed, they are by no means uncommon on board vessels, though I don't suppose that sailors (and still less cats) note the distinction. I caught one in a hen-coop once, and sent it to the Zoo when we got home. On another occasion, a "nest" of eleven young ones was discovered in a sail-locker; one was brought to me dead, and perceiving that it was of the black variety, I hastened to rescue the others, but arrived in time to save only the last two. Of these I determined to keep one and give the other to one of my two pet boas which had just cast its skin. But in opening the little box in their cage, I managed to let both rats adrift; one was instantly doubled up by the boa which had no right to it, and the justifiably hungry one and I had an exciting chase after the other rat, all round the cage, but she was quicker than I, and a scratched hand was all that I had left to show for my efforts at preservation of the species.

The great objection usually raised to these animals is their smell, and certainly a big cageful of them is something awful—unless they are properly kept. At sea I used formerly to establish my stock of them on deck, well forward; and even there, although the box was carefully cleaned every day, the butcher declared that they caused the death of two sheep who were located a little abaft them. On shore I wasn't allowed to keep them at all, and had

to get supplies for immediate consumption as I wanted them, in a hand to mouth sort of way. By careful attention to little points in their feeding, etc., I managed to abate the nuisance somewhat, but it was some time before I hit on the great secret. Now I can keep half-a-gross of rats in a small room without giving offence to olfactory susceptibilities far more exquisite than my own somewhat blunted and hardy perception. In my last cabin I had the doors of the lockers under my bunk grated, and so turned the whole space into a huge rat-park—whereas a dozen in the open air used fairly to "hum," as an old quartermaster expressed it. How is this almost magical change for the better effected? Give them hay or sawdust for a bed; none but dry food, such as bread, biscuit, hemp-seed, oats, or corn of any sort, with a very little bit of green stuff now and then—no potatoes, boiled rice, meat, soaked bread, milk, or anything of that kind; plenty of perches to climb on, so that they can comb out their coats; all these things will mitigate the effluvium, but will not abolish it, as long as water is allowed to stand in their cage. If you watch them, you will see that as soon as they have slaked their thirst they begin to wash their faces, dipping their fore-paws in and throwing up the water much like a human being; then extending their operations, they gradually effect an ablution of the whole body, those who cannot take up a position at the edge of the vessel making no scruple to go right in over the heads of their fellows. This they will repeat as long as any water is left; no matter how big a dish or basin may be supplied to them it is soon empty, and in consequence the water is splashed all over the cage until the floor is one wet puddle, with the result that might be easily imagined. Thus, it is their very excess of cleanliness that has brought these little beasts into such just disrepute; all rats are very orderly about their persons, and it has been well said that no other creature could live in the filthy situations they sometimes affect, yet always have a clean skin. It is very difficult to arrange any sort of drinking apparatus which will satisfy their requirements—for they are thirsty little souls—and render it impossible for them to spill the water at the same time; so I put in a large saucer twice or thrice a day for a few minutes. When they have drunk their fill and begin to tub, I remove it, and in that way keep them dry, comfortable, tame, odourless, and giving

very little trouble. In cold weather, the temptation to bathe is not so strong and they may be trusted with a cup, which should be fixed, so that it cannot be capsize, as near the top of their cage as possible.

If a white rat escapes into a sewer or other domain of his grey brother, the latter very quickly makes a formal assertion of his seigniority by eating him. But it is a very extraordinary fact that a number of albinos in a cage will frighten away the other rats. Why this is, I haven't the least idea; but that it is so I have reason to believe has been proved in several instances that have come under my notice. In steamers that have been overrun with these vermin, mine has been the only cabin free from their incursions, although my predecessors have complained bitterly of the depredations they have committed. I have observed it also in an infested cellar on terra firma, but the most remarkable confirmation of this circumstance I ever saw was at sea. I lived in a cabin on the upper deck, one of several opening into an alley-way, and all, as well as the surrounding deck-houses, haunted by these pests to an extent which was seriously inconvenient, to say the least of it. To keep a bird was well-nigh impossible, while inanimate property deteriorated considerably from their visitations or disappeared altogether. So said my neighbours, for I slept tranquilly over sixty albinos, and did not see a dark intruder the whole voyage, though there was a big "run" under the settee. Well, everybody declared it must be the snakes that kept them off, so, knowing that they had nothing to do with it, I devised a test. The dispensary, just opposite, was vermin-stricken in common with the rest of the alley-way; they did not take the medicines, it is true, though linseed-meal, sticking-plaister, oiled-silk, adhesive labels, pill-boxes, bandages, and wrappers found great favour in their eyes. But what they specially coveted was a towel or glass-cloth, such as I was accustomed to keep there to dry my fingers from accidental spills when the boat was rolling, or to occasionally wipe a bottle or glass when "serving out" physic, as the sailors used to say. Whether the slight medicinal flavour thus acquired commended it specially to them or not, I do not pretend to say; but certain it was that no sooner was my back turned, even in the daytime, than the cloth was dragged off the rail where it hung and pulled in under the chest of drawers. It was some

while before the mystery of this disappearance was solved, and I fear that my unfortunate boy had rather a warm time of it, until he one day desperately pulled out the bottom drawer in a lucid interval, and disclosed a heap of nibbled rags. Here was a golden opportunity for proving my theory! I put half-a-dozen albinos in a parrot-cage and stood it on the floor of the dispensary; for two days the glass-cloth was unmolested. Then I placed a piece of bread there on the third evening; next morning, I found it very slightly gnawed and moved a few inches, as if the whiskered banditti had begun to carry it off but had been scared from their intent by a ghostly apparition in the parrot-cage. But on the third morning, the cage was furnished with rather too liberal a bed, and during the day the bread was devoured, because the wraiths were all laid—under the hay; as soon as this was trampled down and bitten small, however, so that the white occupants were always visible, a second piece of bread was untouched and the thieves returned no more until the surgery was relieved of the dreadful Presence and the glass-cloths made fast to a nail. Let those who have white rats try this experiment.

If the object be to keep rats perfectly tame, they should not be provided with too much hay or straw, or they will burrow underneath it all day, only appearing at night, and in consequence get shy. Cotton-wool, or tow, is always bad for them. They soon get accustomed to being handled, and manifest evident pleasure in caresses and fondling; if it is necessary to pick them up before they are tame, the proper way to catch hold of them is to seize the tail close to the root between the finger and thumb, lift them so, and lay them on the coat-sleeve, where their movements in any direction may be controlled without incurring a bite. They can bite, and very sharply, too; and I would strongly impress a caution never to play with them by putting the fingers against the wire of their cage from the outside. If you introduce the hand bodily, they will clutch it in their paws and possibly in their mouths, but without doing any harm; if, however, it merely touches the wire, they make an effort to get at it—they are most inquisitive little brutes—and can just reach it with the tips of their projecting incisors, which will cut the flesh like chisels. A man was idly tapping the grating of my locker one day and rubbing the noses of the inmates, when he uttered a sharp exclamation,

and at the same moment a jet of blood spurted right across the cabin. A rat had nipped the extreme end of his finger, and had just sliced into a vein; and a lot of bother that finger gave me. The patient lost much blood from several recurrences of the hæmorrhage; it was some time before this was permanently arrested, and much more before the wound healed.

Why it is that all rats, wild as well as tame, are so acutely startled by a—what shall I call it?—a squeak? perhaps the nearest similitude to their own vocal performance that one can produce. The sound I mean is the kind of chirp made by putting the lips together, or the upper teeth against the lower lip and then sucking in the air—what we use as an encouragement to most animals. But it frightens rats more than a pistol-shot; it absolutely seems to strike them like a blow and almost knocks them over, and the universal jump and motionless pause which follows in a crowd of them playing or feeding is most extraordinary. Furthermore, they never become habituated to it. It must be due to some peculiar specialised sensitiveness of the auditory mechanism.

I was sitting writing one night in a room where a box of rats had been kept for some time, when my attention was at length attracted by repeated squealings proceeding from the dark corner in which it stood. They were not a large family—four or five only, if I remember rightly—but, having been reprieved from time to time, they had been in possession of the box for some weeks. No pains had been taken to render them particularly tame, so they slept in hiding all day, and at night came up to feed and climb and have little rows and fights among themselves “for diversion.” An occasional outcry, therefore, I did not regard, but this was so continuous and emphatic that at last I got up and went over to see what the matter was. I found that one or two of the wires having become loosened, an adventurous spirit had pushed his way through, but had got dreadfully alarmed at finding himself outside, and was holding on to the bars, yelling all his might to get back again, while his brethren inside were sitting up in paralysed astonishment. I opened the door and he darted in, and tranquility prevailed for the rest of the night.

They are usually extremely nervous about leaving the box where they have been kept for any length of time, and it has sometimes been several hours before

they could be induced to come out, even when temptation appealing to their hunger or thirst was offered. They nibble their domiciles at any projecting edge, but obviously without any idea of effecting an escape.

It is surprising what an amount of heat they generate. The vital processes must go on in them very rapidly; there is an active assimilation of oxygen, and, consequently, a great evolution of heat and carbonic acid to correspond. I had a melancholy demonstration of this fact. While their cage was being scrubbed out, I put about two dozen of them, fine full-grown albinos and piebalds, fat as pigs, into a deep tin box without a cover, the sides of which they could neither leap nor scale. They were huddled together at the bottom pretty closely, certainly, but not more so than they usually lie of their own accord, not covering or squeezing one another or anything of that sort; nor, be it observed, were they frightened, which might have made a difference. It was the depth of the box that did it; when I returned in about twenty minutes, all but three were dead, suffocated, poisoned by their own exhalations—poor little wretches!

The giant toad (*Bufo agua*) of Tropical America eats rats, and has been bred in certain countries (notably in Jamaica) for the purpose of destroying them. There are three fine specimens in the Zoological Gardens, which are fed on young rats and mice. But, curiously enough, the first of these batrachians that came into my possession fell a victim to the rapacity of a white rat. Having no very convenient separate accommodation for it on the voyage, I put it into a case with a young anaconda where it would always have access to a bath, knowing that there was no danger of either molesting the other. One night, forgetting all about the toad, I put in a rat for the snake's supper and a biscuit for the rat's; it was dark, and though I heard a little commotion presently, I took no notice of it. But when I looked in with a light before turning in, an hour later, to see if the rat was gone, judge of my disgust at beholding the poor toad on his back, a corpse, and the rat most busily performing a post-mortem examination, while the anaconda had retreated up the branch, leaving the arena clear for the combat—if combat there had been. Common rats are great devourers of frogs, when they can get at them; but what will

they not consume? Even field-mice are reputed to be frog-eaters.

But I never thought the parade of my scanty rat-lore would involve so much inkshed. I must put aside the wild ones for a second course

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III. CHAPTER V. THE SHADOW.

"YOU never seem very far away from me—never so far but that a thought can call you back again. It must be that you are garnered up in my heart so closely, that neither time nor distance can take you from me. I never seem to be alone. Even when I wander in the woods among the pines where all is so hushed and still, even there you are beside me—the thought of you is all about me like the very air I breathe. I often wonder how I lived before you came to me, Ralph."

Thus Hilda, yielding all her heart, forgot, in the glamour of this supreme hour—the hour of a love for the first time confessed, for the first time finding voice in lingering kiss and sweet caress—that life was not all love, and that shadows—one most sad and terrible—hovered about her pathway.

Her strange, sorrow-darkened childhood, her girlhood full of grave thought and surroundings, her womanhood weighted with a sad, strange responsibility and so robbed of its elasticity and youthfulness, all these things counted now as less than naught. In past days they had seemed as burdens too heavy to be borne; but now, since this wondrous radiance of love had made the world so fair to her eyes, and life had grown to be a thing desirable as beautiful, they took such guise no more.

If she were in direst trouble, there was one to whom she could go in fullest trust and say, "I am sad, comfort me," or "I am sorry, take half the burden of my sorrow."

Nay, she scarce would need to say these things, for Ralph would read her heart as he might a well-loved book; no tear should ever rise again to the eyes that had shed so many, but his loving lips should kiss it away ere it had time to fall; and if that great and terrible sorrow should come, then they would clasp hands close and fast, and so meet it bravely.

Thoughtful and grave beyond her years,

yet was Hilda in many ways still simple as the child who sat singing at her work in the little house among the dykes. She knew no guile of counterfeited coyness; nor yet of assumed tenderness. For her, the admiration of the many held no charm; but the approbation of those she loved was as the sunshine to the flowers. Such a nature, existing in the closest contact with such a one as that of Hester Devenant could not but suffer acutely. Hungry for a kind look or a tender word, Hilda had had to starve. She had given all and taken little or nothing in return. But this experience and discipline of life, bitter as they had been in the past, now added an unspeakable content and happiness to the present. Sweeter to Hilda than they could have been to any woman less sternly schooled, were Ralph's gifts of tenderness and sympathy.

Ralph was sitting in a low chair near the mantel-shelf. Hilda knelt beside her lover; her hands, clasped in his, were held against his breast; her eyes were dreamy and languorous as those of one who, waking from sleep to find herself surrounded by a world of new and beautiful delights, is ready to question if reality be real, or if fancy does not masquerade as fact.

Hilda listening to the rushing of the river; Hilda dreaming of a troubled sea, among whose tossing breakers a fainting swimmer fights in vain for life; and now, Hilda kneeling by her dear love's side, her hands clasped in his, her lips still tremulous from the passionate pressure of that first sweet kiss—what a change is here!

"But, Hilda," said Ralph, rallying his darling with a loving irony, "I did not come to you, you came to me from under the shadow of the clematis—you came singing the old song you sang to-night."

At this allusion Hilda grew rosy, and, her hands being closely prisoned, hid her face against the nearest shelter—her lover's shoulder.

"It was cruel of me to make you sing it," he murmured in her ear, speaking as softly as though a listening world stood by; "I might have known——"

"You might have known I loved you too well to sing it through without breaking down," put in Hilda, lifting her face, beautiful in shame, from its hiding-place, but smiling as she scolded; "and you did know it—you know you did—and it was very mean of you, Master Ralph!"

"Call me that again, and I will make you sing it all through, from beginning to end, every word of it, this very minute," said the person thus addressed, giving her a little loving shake.

"Well then—Ralph. And now, confess, were you not cruel? Did you not know?"

"I was cruel, and I knew, but it was so sweet to hear your dear voice falter (as I knew it would), so sweet to silence it at last altogether—as I did! Nay, do not turn your head away, dear. Tell me that you do not grudge me the gift you have given me to-night—the gift of your own sweet self to be my wife, my friend, my precious counsellor through life, my dear companion—all things in one. Sweetheart, kiss me of your own free will; then I shall know myself a pardoned penitent."

She laid her arms about his neck, lifting her happy mouth for the kiss that dropped upon it.

Then, when she could find her voice, she said:

"I will try to be all those beautiful things to you, and more—Heaven helping me. And, Ralph, I am not angry, but glad that you made me sing that dear old song, since it pleased you!"

The look that accompanied the words might well have touched any man's heart. To Ralph they brought a sobering sense of responsibility; a sudden perception of how great a thing all a true woman gives when she gives her life into a man's hand, saying: "Do with it as you will, it is yours to make or mar."

He folded his arm about Hilda's pliant form and drew her close to his heart. In his mind were solemn thoughts.

Outside the river crooned softly to the night; its song of rhythmical monotonies sounded to Hilda like a murmur of ineffable content; the very outcome of a restfulness that was complete, and could know no torturing or disturbing dreams.

How changed was that voice in her ears since the time when its rush and sullen flow seemed the dirge of a young life ended—the coronach of a home made desolate!

Overhead the orange tints were dying, and the pallid purple shadows grew. Yet daylight lingered as though the summer world were far too fair to be left willingly, and the moon that overhung the pine-woods as yet shone but faintly, while her attendant star was but a tiny flickering point of light.

And Hilda, hushed in the hush of the gloaming, at rest within the shelter of her lover's arms, bethought her of the service of love to which her life was vowed, of the shadows that beset her pathway, of the darkest shadow of all, and, as she thought, she sighed.

She had been so happy—poor Hilda!—in this last golden hour, that she would fain have forgotten the existence of sorrow as an element of life.

"What is it, dear one?" asked Ralph, stirred into electric sympathy by the tremor of that gentle sigh.

"Ralph," said Hilda, freeing herself from his arm, rising to her feet, standing before him, slender, yet resolute, with something pleading in her attitude and voice, yet much of courage too; "Ralph, there is something I must say."

"Is there?" he answered, looking up at her in the soft grey light, and thinking that her beauty, painted on the dusk, showed all the fairer for its sombre canvas; "say it then. I am not afraid to hear anything you have to say."

Yet for all these brave and loving words of his, there was a tremble in Hilda's voice as she did his bidding.

"I could never leave mothie. You would not ask me, dear, would you? because you know all I am to her; you have seen it, day by day; but yet I do not love you less, loving her so much—rather more, for all my thoughts and fears for her will now be shared by you. I shall show you all my heart about her one day, keeping nothing back."

In the expansive and delightful frame of mind in which Ralph Stirling found himself at the present juncture, his faith in the large-mindedness of humanity was unbounded; his blind trust and confidence in Lady Boscawen knew no limits. The place that Hester Devenant was to occupy in the glorious future now dawning for himself and Hilda was no longer a misty blur on that mental picture. It was defined and in perfect harmony with the rest.

The (social) arms of the lady of Earl's Cragg were to embrace, not only Hilda, but Hilda's mother. Nurse Prettyman would lighten his darling's cares and duties. But here some slight misgiving came over Ralph. He put back the dark locks from his brow with that gesture that was so like the dead father. There had been certain signs of ill-will in Mrs. Prettyman towards the widow of Gabriel Devenant—signs which had not made much

impression upon Ralph at the time, but which now recurred to him somewhat unpleasantly. Of course women fall out with one another. It is a way they have. Doubtless there had been petty feminine jealousies when Mrs. Devenant was at the Dale. And no one—not even a man who was passionately and intensely in love with her daughter Hilda—could look upon Mrs. Devenant as other than a woman of an irritable and trying temper, whose sorrows and trials had embittered, instead of softening, her nature.

To none had Hester shown to better advantage than to the young squire of Dale End since his return from death to life; and yet, even Ralph quickly understood what a hard woman she was to live with, and his heart swelled within him as he realised that his darling's daily life must be as a pathway set with thorns.

And yet, to come between this mother and daughter—these two who seemed so strangely isolated from all other ties of kindred or of friendship—would have taken the guise of a sin in his eyes. He would sooner strengthen and support Hilda in doing what was right, than lead her to a wrongful and cowardly life of restfulness. Besides, as has been said before, though doubtful how far he could answer for Mrs. Prettyman, he was full of confidence in Lady Boscawen, trusted that others would be led by her, and, in the end, that Mrs. Devenant might be weaned from her morbid love of a solitude which was devoted to dwelling upon a cruel past. So should she be a light and not a shadow in the home that was Hilda's and his.

These thoughts flashed through his mind as Hilda spoke of "Mothie" with a tremble in her voice.

When she had said her say, and waited—drawing her breath a little quickly—for his reply, he took her hand, and with a gentle chivalry that well became him, raised it to his lips, holding it there a moment or so before he let it go. And Hilda, knowing all the meaning of that mute caress, and that she and mothie were to be given over to Ralph's dear keeping—together, not apart—loved him with a deeper and completer love than ever, if that were possible, for mothie's sake.

"My love," she said, "my love!" and as he rose, and clasped his arm about her shoulders, she turned and touched his hand with her lips, the while a little sob of mingled joy, and pride, and passionate tenderness, told how deeply she was stirred.

"I have stayed away from mother too long as it is," she said, speaking rather breathlessly in her sudden fit of self-reproach; "I have been so happy, that I have forgotten all the world except you, Ralph! I will go now and tell her all my happy news."

She flitted through the dusk that was rapidly silvering into moonlight, leaving him alone with his own thoughts, or rather misgivings.

For the spell of her immediate presence removed, misgivings crowded on him thick and fast.

He remembered Davey, who, from being an ever-welcome friend, had apparently all at once presented himself to Mrs. Devenant's mind as a would-be robber and an enemy. Would a like fate overtake himself? If so, how best to shield Hilda from trouble, and yet yield not one inch in his resolve to claim her as his wife before the world?

"Nothing shall part us, nothing!" he muttered to himself as he paced impatiently up and down the room, whose floor was barred with a broad pathway of moonlight that came shimmering through the open casement.

And as he chafed and fought with many windmills in the form of possible obstacles to be put in the way of his desires, Hilda came stealing to his side, slipping her hand under his arm, and pacing by his side to and fro, to and fro, while that glorified track of light seemed a fitting pathway for those whose hearts were bright with the dual flame of hope and love.

"She is still asleep," said Hilda, speaking softly, as people are apt to do in the moonlight; "I covered her feet with a shawl, and lighted the lamp so that she might not wake in the dark. The moon is not shining in at her window as it is here. Poor mothie!—she looks so tired and worn, Ralph, when she is sleeping. It is only then you really see how worn she is, and when she wakes she says the strangest things sometimes, or rather she says them in her sleep—over and over again—until she wakes."

"What things, Hilda?"

"Strange things; and, do you know, I sometimes fancy that Davey was not always kind to her."

"Davey not kind to her? I cannot fancy Davey anything but kind and tender to every suffering creature on earth!"

"Nor I, and that is what troubles me. I seem to be doing him a cruel wrong, and

yet—his name is for ever on my mother's lips. Sometimes I wake with the sound of it ringing in my ears, 'Davey, Davey! do not call me that; not that—not that!' Ah, it is pitiful to hear how she will moan, while you can see the great beads of sweat standing on her forehead, and her hands twisting and turning like those of one in dreadful pain."

"Hilda, this must be some fancy that has taken possession of her mind; some perverted fancy that clings to her, and will not be cast aside; it cannot have any ground in truth."

"No, no," said Hilda, clinging closely to her lover's arm, and trembling as she still kept pace with him. "No, it cannot be a real thing that haunts her so, and yet how terrible and real it seems at the time! 'Not that, not that; anything but that!' I tell you the cry lingers in my ears—pierces to my heart. I start from my sleep, even when all is quiet, fancying that I hear it still."

"Does she ever walk in her sleep?" said Ralph, holding the girl's hand firmly in his own, so that she might feel conscious of the comfort and stay of his nearness, his oneness with her in all that could distress or try her.

"Yes; not often, but yet often enough to make me never really at rest about her. Sometimes she will talk about my—my father—about his terrible death—fancy she is hunting him along the roads and down by the dykes—but oftenest it is Davey—Davey pursuing her with some horrible threat and accusation."

"Accusation?"

"Yes; for, once, as I was following her, afraid to wake her lest some evil should befall her, she fell forward on her knees, put up her hands as if to shield herself from something, and cried out, 'Not that, Davey, not that!' And then she cowered down upon the ground, moaning and crying, 'I tell you there is no blood upon my hands.' It is, may be, wrong to tell you all these things. I have borne them in silence. I have told them to no one—no one! I have kept it all hidden, even from the servants in the house, but now is it wrong, dear, to tell you how my heart is breaking for her?"

Gathering her closely to him, Ralph leads her to the low, wide window-seat in the hollow of the casement. A perfect

flood of light now filters down upon river and tree, kissing the little ripples as they pass, and tipping every branch with silver. This gracious stream of radiance falls on Hilda's pale and troubled face; on eyes, not tearful, but full of fear and sadness; on lips so pallid, that her lover's kisses hardly woo life and colour back again.

She lies within the shelter of his arms, his hand, with gentle caressing touch, passes over and over her wealth of ruffled nut-brown locks.

He soothes her as a mother soothes a sick or frightened child. He is tender as a woman, strong as a man. He is brother, lover, both in one; and so her terror passes. A little trembling smile dawns about her mouth. She puts up her hand to his hair. She laughs, with laughter that is very soft and low, and half of tears. "How good you are—how good!" she says; "sorrow can never do me much harm, while I have you!"

After this they are both silent a while. They might well gaze at the beauty of the night, since no fairer surely ever shone; but to gaze at each other is to them just now the better pastime.

So they take their fill of looking, and Hilda is happy beyond all words, though her cheek is still pale, and her eyes wistful.

All at once she starts. A shadow has come between them and the moonlight—a shadow falls upon them as they sit there, side by side, and hand-in-hand.

The shadow is that of Hester Devenant. Her face shows ghastly in its pallor as the moonlight touches it. Her eyes, dark and menacing, are fixed on Ralph.

But Hilda sees none of these things.

She kneels up upon the window-seat, stretching impatient, loving hands out into the beauteous night.

"Oh, mothie, mothie!" she cries, "come in; the dew is falling, dear. You should not have gone out—indeed you should not! I thought you were still asleep. Come in, and bless your happy child!"

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LIII. THE BEGINNING OF THE LAST PLOT.

WHEN Mr. Scarborough had written the cheque and sent it to Mr. Grey, he did not utter another word on the subject of gambling. "Let us make another beginning," he said, as he told his son to make out another cheque for sixty pounds as his first instalment of the allowance.

"I do not like to take it," said the son.

"I don't think you need be scrupulous now with me." That was early in the morning, at their first interview, about ten o'clock. Later on in the day Mr. Scarborough saw his son again, and on this occasion kept him in the room for some time. "I don't suppose I shall last much longer now," he said.

"Your voice is as strong as I ever heard it."

"But unfortunately my body does not keep pace with my voice. From what Merton says, I don't suppose that there is above a month left."

"I don't see why Merton is to know."

"Merton is a good fellow; and if you can do anything for him, do it for my sake."

"I will." Then he added after a pause:

"If things go as we expect, Augustus can do more for him than I. Why don't you leave him a sum of money?"

Then Miss Scarborough came into the room and hovered about her brother, and fed him, and entreated him to be silent; but when she had gone he went back to the subject. "I will tell you why, Mountjoy. I have not wished to load my will with other considerations,—so that it might be seen that solicitude for you has

been in my last moments my only thought. Of course I have done you a deep injury."

"I think you have."

"And because you tell me so, I like you all the better. As for Augustus— But I will not burden my spirit now at the last with uttering curses against my own son."

"He is not worth it."

"No; he is not worth it. What a fool he has been not to have understood me better! Now you are not half as clever a fellow as he is."

"I dare say not."

"You never read a book, I suppose?"

"I don't pretend to read them, which he does."

"I don't know anything about that;—but he has been utterly unable to read me. I have poured out my money with open hands for both of you."

"That is true, sir, certainly, as regards me."

"And have thought nothing of it. Till it was quite hopeless with you I went on, and would have gone on. As things were then, I was bound to do something to save the property."

"These poor devils have put themselves out of the running now," said Mountjoy.

"Yes; Augustus with his suspicions has enabled us to do that. After all he was quite right with his suspicions."

"What do you mean by that, sir?"

"Well;—it was natural enough that he should not trust me. I think, too, that perhaps he saw a screw loose where old Grey did not. But he was such an ass, that he could not bring himself to keep on good terms with me for the few months that were left. And then he brought that brute Jones down here, without saying a word to me as to asking my leave. And here he used to remain, hardly ever coming

to see me ; but waiting for my death from day to day. He is a cold-blooded selfish brute. He certainly takes after neither his father nor his mother. But he will find yet, perhaps, that I am even with him before all is over."

"I shall try it on with him, sir. I have told you so from the beginning ; and now if I have this money it will give me the means of doing so. You ought to know for what purpose I shall use it."

"That is all settled," said the father. "The document properly completed has gone back with the clerk. Were I to die this minute you would find that everything inside the house is your own ;—and everything outside except the bare acres. There is a lot of plate with the banker which I have not wanted of late years. And there are a lot of trinkets too ;—things which I used to fancy, though I have not cared so much about them lately. And there are a few pictures which are worth money. But the books are the most valuable ;—only you do not care for them."

"I shall not have a house to put them in."

"There is no saying. What an idiot, what a fool, what a blind unthinking ass Augustus has been !"

"Do you regret it, sir,—that he should not have them and the house too ?"

"I regret that my son should have been such a fool ! I did not expect that he should love me. I did not even want him to be kind to me. Had he remained away and been silent, that would have been sufficient. But he came here to enjoy himself, as he looked about the park which he thought to be his own, and insulted me because I would not die at once and leave him in possession. And then he was fool enough to make way for you again, and did not perceive that by getting rid of your creditors, he once again put you into a position to be his rival. I don't know whether I hate him most for the hardness of his heart, or despise him for the slowness of his intellect."

During the time that these words had been spoken, Miss Scarborough had once or twice come into the room, and besought her brother to take some refreshment which she offered him, and then give himself up to rest. But he had refused to be guided by her till he had come to a point in the conversation at which he had found himself thoroughly exhausted. Now she came for the third time, and that period

had arrived, so that Mountjoy was told to go about his business, and shoot birds, or hunt foxes, in accordance with his natural proclivities. It was then three o'clock on a gloomy December afternoon, and was too late for the shooting of birds ; and as for the hunting of foxes the hounds were not in the neighbourhood. So he resolved to go through the house, and look at all those properties which were so soon to become his own. And he at once strolled into the library. This was a long gloomy room which contained perhaps ten thousand volumes, the greater number of which had, in the days of Mountjoy's early youth, been brought together by his own father. And they had been bound in the bindings of modern times, so that the shelves were bright, although the room itself was gloomy. He took out book after book, and told himself with something of sadness in his heart that they were all "caviare" to him. Then he reminded himself that he was not yet thirty years of age, and that there was surely time enough left for him to make them his companions. He took one at random, and found it to be a volume of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion. He pitched upon a sentence in which he counted that there were sixteen lines, and when he began to read it, it became to him utterly confused and unintelligible. So he put it back and went to another portion of the room and took down Wittier's Hallelujah. And of this he could make neither head nor tail. He was informed by a heading in the book itself that a piece of poetry was to be sung "as the ten commandments." He could not do that, and put the book back again, and declared to himself that further search would be useless. He looked round the room and tried to price the books, and told himself that three or four days at the club might see an end of it all. Then he wandered on into the state drawing-room, an apartment which he had not entered for years, and found that all the furniture was carefully covered. Of what use could it all be to him ?—unless that it too might be sent to the melting-pot and brought into some short-lived use at the club.

But as he was about to leave the room, he stood for a moment on the rug before the fireplace and looked into the huge mirror which stood there. If the walls might be his, as well as the garnishing of them, and if Florence Mountjoy could come and reign there, then he fancied that they all might be put to a better purpose

than that of which he had thought. In earlier days, two or three years ago, at a time which now seemed to him to be very distant, he had regarded Florence as his own, and as such had demanded her hand. In the pride of his birth, and position, and fashion, he had had no thought of her feelings, and had been imperious. He told himself that it had been so, with much self-condemnation. At any rate he had learned during those months of solitary wandering the power of condemning himself. And now he told him that if she would yet come he might still learn to sing that song of the old-fashioned poet "As to the ten commandments." At any rate, he would endeavour to sing it, as she bade him.

He went on through all the bedrooms, remembering, but hardly more than remembering them, as he entered them. "Oh, Florence;—my Florence," he said as he passed on. He had done it all for himself,—brought down upon his own head this infinite ruin;—and for what? He had scarcely ever won, and Tretton was gone from him for ever. But still there might yet be a chance,—if he could abstain from gambling.

And then, when it was dusk within the house, he went out, and passed through the stables and roamed about the gardens till the evening had altogether set in, and black night had come upon him. Two years ago he had known that he was the heir to it all, though even then that habit was so strong upon him he had felt that his tenure of it would be but slight. But he had then always to tell himself that when his marriage had taken place a great change would be effected. His marriage had not taken place, and the next fatal year had fallen upon him. As long as the inheritance of the estate was certainly his, he could assuredly raise money—at a certain cost. It was well known that the property was rising in value, and the money had always been forthcoming,—at a tremendous sacrifice. He had excused to himself his recklessness on the ground of his delayed marriage; but still always treating her on the few occasions on which they had met with an imperiousness which had been natural to him. Then the final crash had come, and the estate was as good as gone. But the crash, which had been in truth final, had come afterwards, almost as soon as his father had learned what was to be the fate of Tretton, and he had found himself to be a bastard with a dis-

honoured mother,—just a nobody in the eyes of the world. And he learnt at the same time that Harry Annesley was the lover whom Florence Mountjoy really loved. What had followed has been told already,—perhaps too often.

But at this moment as he stood in the gloom of the night, below the porch in the front of the house, swinging his stick at the top of the big steps, an acknowledgment of contrition was very heavy upon him. Though he was prepared to go to law the moment that Augustus put himself forward as the eldest son, he did recognise how long-suffering his father had been, and how much had been done for him in order if possible to preserve him. And he knew, whatever might be the result of his lawsuit, that his father's only purpose had been to save the property for one of them. As it was, legacies which might be valued at perhaps thirty thousand pounds would be his. He would expend it all on the lawsuit,—if he could find lawyers to undertake his suit. His anger too, against his brother was quite as hot as was that of his father. When he had been obliterated and obliged to vanish, from the joint effects of his violence in the streets, and his inability to pay his gambling debts at the club, he had in an evil moment submitted himself to Augustus. And from that hour Augustus had become to him the most cruel of tyrants. And this tyranny had come to an end with his absolute banishment from his brother's house. Though he had been subdued to obedience in the lowest moment of his fall, he was not the man who could bear such tyranny well. "I can forgive my father," he said, "but Augustus I will never forgive." Then he went into the house, and in a short time was sitting at dinner with Merton, the young doctor and secretary. Miss Scarborough seldom came to table at that hour, but remained in a room upstairs, close to her brother, so that she might be within call should she be wanted. "Upon the whole, Merton," he said, "what do you think of my father?" The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "Will he live or will he die?"

"He will die, certainly."

"Do not joke with me. But I know you would not joke on such a subject. And my question did not merely go to the state of his health. What do you think of him as a man generally? Do you call him an honest man?"

"How am I to answer you?"

"Just the truth."

"If you will have an answer, I do not consider him an honest man. All this story about your brother is true or is not true. In neither case can one look upon him as honest."

"Just so."

"But I think that he has within him a capacity for love, and an unselfishness, which almost atones for his dishonesty. And there is about him a strange dislike to conventionality and to law which is so interesting as to make up the balance. I have always regarded your father as a most excellent man; but thoroughly dishonest. He would rob anyone,—but always to eke out his own gifts to other people. He has therefore to my eyes been most romantic."

"And as to his health?"

"Ah, as to that I cannot answer so decidedly. He will do nothing because I tell him."

"Do you mean that you could prolong his life?"

"Certainly I think that I could. He has exerted himself this morning; whereas I have advised him not to exert himself. He could have given himself the same counsel, and would certainly live longer by obeying it than the reverse. As there is no difficulty in the matter, there need be no conceit on my part in saying that so far my advice might be of service to him."

"How long will he live?"

"Who can say? Sir William Brodrick, when that fearful operation was performed in London, thought that a month would see the end of it. That is eight months ago, and he has more vitality now than he had then. For myself I do not think that he can live another month."

Later on in the evening, Mountjoy Scarborough began again. "The governor thinks that you have behaved uncommonly well to him."

"I am paid for it all."

"But he has not left you anything by his will."

"I have certainly expected nothing; and there could be no reason why he should."

"He has entertained an idea of late that he wishes to make what reparation may be possible to me. And, therefore, as he says, he does not choose to burden his will with legacies. There is some provision made for my aunt, who, however, has her own fortune. He has told me to look after you."

"It will be quite unnecessary," said Mr. Merton.

"If you choose to cut up rough you can do so. I would propose that we should fix upon some sum which shall be yours at his death;—just as though he had left it to you. Indeed he shall fix the sum himself."

Merton of course said that nothing of the kind would be necessary. But with this understanding Mountjoy Scarborough went that night to bed.

Early on the following morning his father again sent for him. "Mountjoy," he said, "I have thought much about it, and I have changed my mind."

"About your will?"

"No, not about my will at all. That shall remain as it is. I do not think I should have strength to make another will; nor do I wish to do so."

"You mean about Merton."

"I don't mean about Merton at all. Give him five hundred pounds, and he ought to be satisfied. This is a matter of more importance than Mr. Merton;—or even than my will."

"What is it?" said Mountjoy in a tone of much surprise.

"I don't think I can tell you now. But it is right that you should know that Merton wrote by my instructions to Mr. Grey early this morning, and has implored him to come to Tretton once again. There! I cannot say more than that now." Then he turned round on his couch, as was his custom, and was unassailable.

RATS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

It is a curious thing that rats and mice will not exist together in any situation where they are so confined as to be constantly at close quarters with each other—the former eating up their small cousins. Of course, both are often found in the same house, where there is plenty of scope for escape; rarely in any far isolated building, unless there happens to be abundance of food there. Mice are scarcely ever known on board ships, while very few craft can boast exemption from the larger vermin. As for keeping tame rats and mice together, no amount of good things will prevent the slaughter of the latter, which seem to be esteemed as the greatest delicacy that earth produces by their semi-cannibalistic devourers. I have a painful remembrance of putting four

white rats in with twenty pretty little mice—white and jet-black, yellow, piebald, dove-coloured, fawn-coloured, and all sorts—under the impression that they would keep each other warm, for it was bitterly cold weather; and there is no doubt they made it remarkably hot for the poor mice. I had no idea of the furry tragedies that must have been enacted almost hourly underneath that hay; but when I turned out the box in three or four days' time, not a mouse remained to squeak the tale—not a whole mouse, that is; copious fragmentary evidence of what had taken place lay there, but not enough, even if it could have been put together, to raise a squeak. It had struck me as somewhat extraordinary that the bread and biscuit were scarcely nibbled, but I set it down to the severity of the weather, and concluded that they all preferred to remain below, keeping each other warm. Artemus Ward's experience of sheep-farming was brought vividly to my recollection. The flock got on splendidly until the sheep-dogs were introduced; by an unfortunate little mistake—and mistakes will occur, in sheep-farming and snake-farming, too—these happened to be blood-hounds, and in less than ten minutes the whole field was strewn with mutton-chops.

Rats, both wild and tame, eat the newly-born of their community, also; the gourmand being, as a rule, not the mother—unless she chances to be disturbed, when she swallows her progeny to protect them from danger—but some friend of the family who is lucky enough to light on the brood. What an ugly thing a little naked rat is! the most perfect counterfeit in miniature of a hippopotamus! With its podgy, rotund body and thick, square, elephantine sort of head, its rat-hood would never be recognised by anyone who was acquainted only with the slender, sharp-nosed adults.

Certainly the place to study these vermin in their utmost luxuriance is on board a ship where there is no cat. I don't believe that sea-going cats catch very many—they are too well-fed and lazy for that—but their mere presence seems to keep the rats under. Possibly it is that being afraid to come within knowledge of the enemy (which, with their sharp senses of hearing, sight, and smell, would mean a pretty "wide berth"), the rats are compelled to remain within a limited space and prey on each other; but whatever the reason may be, it is an undoubted fact that their numbers seem to

increase enormously if the vessel happens to be without a cat, when they get bold beyond belief. It is strange that nothing seems to terrify them but the feline monitor. I have sailed in steamers under these circumstances where they were becoming absolutely dangerous from their multitude and impudence; committing their ravages in broad daylight under one's very nose; almost disputing the food on the table with the legitimate diners; and either making leisurely off when assaulted, or sometimes actually turning and facing their assailant.

Such a state of affairs as this is something more than an inconvenience. We used to kill numbers of them with the greatest ease, but the fate of their comrades had no deterrent effect upon the surviving criminals, as far as we could see. No wonder that cats rose in price at the first port we touched at; I should think they have been scarce there ever since. It is no exaggeration to say that at night, when all was still, the rats appeared in shoals, rushing past one down the companions, tumbling from beams with a dull thud, sweeping across the moonlit decks and awnings like the shadow of a cloud, and starting up unexpectedly under one's hands or feet; while their clatter and uproar, dragging about of heavy things, capsizing dishes and basins, squealing and yells, combined with their occasional jumping or dropping on us or running across our faces, rendered it necessary to be very sleepy indeed before turning in with any hope of rest. The boats are always their great resort, since they are generally sure of getting a drink there; rain-water collects in them, or lies in the depressions of their canvas covers. An experienced nautical cat will be seen to frequently climb the davits and make an inspection of the boats at sea. It used to be rather amusing to watch the rats at night, running from davit to davit along the chain to which the awning-lanyards are made fast, their lithe bodies sharply defined against the clear sky.

I usually slept on deck at that time, since my cabin on the main-deck was insufferably hot from its proximity to the engine-room, and was furthermore so low in the water that the scuttle had to be closed whenever the breeze was on that side—not to mention its being the club of the largest and most infamous cockroaches I ever knew. One night as I lay on one of the 'mid-ship quarter-deck settees, a pointed whiskery nose suddenly appeared above the edge of

the open sky-light, close to my face, and two bright little eyes, sparkling in the moonlight, peered into mine. I kept perfectly still, scarcely breathing, for I should think two minutes, and so did he; then, apparently dissatisfied with his scrutiny, he turned round and dived down into the saloon again, flicking me across the cheek with his tail as he vanished, by way of good-bye. Another night, I was swinging down the steep ladder, which led from the bridge; about three feet from the bottom of this ladder, the covering-board of a steam-pipe a few inches high ran across the spar-deck. I was striding from the lowermost step across to this as I was accustomed to do, for no very particular reason, when I missed it; and my bare foot, falling just short of it, came down—backed by my whole weight—on a warm, soft rat. It gave a writhe, with a smothered kind of shriek, and, for my part, I was not long in removing my foot to a more convenient situation; but my false step in the dark had crushed the life out of the beast, and when the quartermaster brought a light presently, it lay there at its last gasp.

Rats are very playful creatures, and may sometimes be watched, wild ones as well as tame, scampering about and rolling each other over like kittens. Their half-remonstrant cry while engaged in this mimic strife differs as characteristically from their ordinary expression of fright, rage, or pain as does that of a dog, cat, monkey, or any other animal under like circumstances. Personally, I have no loathing of these vermin, none of that intangible horror, over and above a simple aversion to the mischief they cause, with which many people regard them. I dislike them, certainly, but on two very material grounds—the probability of their eating some of my belongings, and the more remote possibility of their eating some of me. I think I have only been bitten twice, notwithstanding that I have had myriads of rats for shipmates in many other vessels besides the one of which I have been speaking. Once I was awake from my sleep on the upper deck by feeling something apparently grasping my leg; I threw out my hand to strike it, but it was gone—not, however, until it had inflicted a sharp nip on the shin through my pyjamas. On the other occasion, I had turned in early—it was the night of sailing from England, and we were running down Channel, too rough for work, too cold for music, too wet to go up and smoke. As I

lay in my heaving bunk, reading, I saw an enormous rat among the battens overhead; so I lazily watched and speculated about him till a loud clang roused me to the fact that he had fallen into my bath, and that I was falling asleep, and might as well honestly shut up my book and put the lamp out. But I hadn't slept very long when my late companion—I suppose it was the same—again disturbed me, this time positively under the bedclothes, between my neck and the pillow! As I sprang up and aimed a blow with my fist at the spot, I felt a hot twinge at my shoulder to which he must have clung as I rose; he escaped, of course, and left me with the blood streaming down my arm. A rat crawled up my back, under my coat, on another occasion, and did not attract attention until it thrust itself into my sleeve; I bent my arm sharply and squeezed it to death without giving it a chance. But I have seen one turn and look at a man who was giving chase to it—the pursuer stopped, somewhat intimidated, and shot his foot out towards it—the rat, instead of running away, leaped on him and bit him twice, just above the knee. There was no cat in that ship, you may bet! The popular notion of their invariably “flying at the throat” when they attack is simply a poetic fallacy which is applied to many animals.

As to their mere contact, I must say that I don't like to be disturbed by either a rat or a rabbit promenading on my countenance after business hours, but I would just as soon have the one as the other. A rat-bite, though, is no joke—not only keen and deep, but the commonly-received belief in its poisonous nature is not altogether devoid of reason. There is nothing venomous about the natural secretions of a rat's mouth, so that its bite cannot, in itself, be considered anything more than a mechanical injury; but it frequently happens with all carnivorous animals that particles of their food, possibly decomposed, are adherent to the teeth and are so deposited in the wound, producing an unhealthy ulcer, or even fatal contamination of the system.

That deep-rooted article of a sailor's faith—the desertion of a doomed ship by her rats before she sails on her fatal voyage—is a pleasing instance of the development of a superstition from a fact. It has happened in more cases than one that the swarming upwards of the rats from the hold has first notified to the crew the existence of a leak below, and that the water was

pouring in on the haunts and fastnesses of the vermin in her bilges or lining. One can imagine a ship lying in port, with all her cargo discharged and stores cleared out, being forsaken by her little four-footed tenants readily enough, especially if she chanced to be berthed alongside a grain-carrier or East Indiaman laden with nice things. As little sentimental devotion to their old craft as prescience of her fate is to be ascribed to them. Why is it that every ship carries a greater or less number of these grey-skinned stowaways, no matter what her freight may consist of, where she may come from, or whither she may be bound? They come aboard from wharves and jetties, amongst the piles or in the warehouses of which they always abound; not unfrequently they are hoisted in with bales of cargo or provisions; and it is said that they sometimes swim off from the land or from one vessel to another.

The spectacle presented by the cavernous space underneath a wooden wharf at low tide, its naked mud crawling with obscene crabs or heaving with wriggling horrors, its green pillars and encrusted ceiling dripping with slimy filth, and its gloom alive with shapeless, shadowy rats, is a dream of delirium tremens or the Inferno, and is enough to make anyone a confirmed murephobe for the remainder of his natural life.

Once established in their floating home, it is almost impossible to eradicate them. The facilities for concealment are very numerous and, as a rule, there is such an abundance of sustenance for them. Traps they will rarely enter; they are suspicious of poison, and if they are beguiled into taking it they get away behind bulkheads and into other inaccessible places to die, and so breed a pestilence. Anything with a very strong admixture of arsenic will preserve the bodies from corruption, unless they get wet; but not one rat in a hundred will even sniff at such a compound, and its trial generally results in the poisoning of every domesticated animal on board, and ends by its finding its way into the coffee one morning, or something of that sort. Occasionally, however, rats will make a mistake, and it is no uncommon thing to pick them up dead in the holds of ships which carry dried hides, in the preparation of which a great deal of arsenic is used. I remember, too, that at hospital we used now and then—very seldom, though there were plenty of them in the drains and sewers below—to find a stiffened rodent in the dissecting-room of a morning, the “subjects” being

strongly impregnated with red lead and arsenic from the injection used to distend the arteries. Dry docking a ship and stripping her inside, or sinking her in harbour, are two extreme measures which are sometimes resorted to for the extermination of these pests and cockroaches as well; the first remedy an ineffectual one, and the other worse than the disease, one would imagine. After all, there is nothing like the moral effect of the harmless necessary cat.

Although pussy is the unrelenting enemy of rats and they stand in wholesome awe of her presence, she is not always victorious in her encounters with them. I have seen a cat rolled over and over by a patriarch on whom she had pounced, and retire from the fray, discomfited, with a severe bite through the lip. In connection with cats and rats, I will mention two episodes that I could scarcely have believed possible, had they not come under my immediate notice. On board the *Elbe* we had a grand, great, yellow cat in the after part of the ship—for cats have their own well-defined homes afloat as ashore, and resent intrusion within their boundaries from feline rivals quite as conservatively as their brethren who enjoy the blessings of the land. Sandy, then, reigned over the saloon and quarter-deck, and was the most accomplished and gentlemanly cat I was ever acquainted with. One morning, while we were lying in the Scheldt abreast of Antwerp, Sandy was seated on the rail, watching the disembarking of the cargo and the various operations of the small craft which surrounded the steamer with that responsible air of general superintendence which distinguished him, when he suddenly caught sight of a rat in one of the lighters alongside. Without a second's hesitation he sprang down from the rail sheer into the lighter's cargo-space, a descent of fully thirty feet, perhaps more! As may be expected, he was nearly killed by the fall, and lay for days almost insensible; but we nursed him round again with beef-tea and brandy.

The other incident was horrible. I had brought an old cat with me, on joining a certain rat-ridden ship, knowing him to be a good sporting animal; it was not mine, but one I had borrowed for the voyage on hearing the vessel's reputation for natural history. She was fairly over-run with vermin from stem to stern, but it appeared that there was an extraordinary concentration of the ratty element in the store-rooms underneath the fore-peak. Nothing served to restrain their depredations, or to

diminish their numbers and audacity; it was scarcely safe to venture down there, and the store-keeper was at his wits' end to know how to protect the articles under his charge. At length he asked me to allow him to put Tim down there at night, not so much in the hope of destroying the rats as of scaring them away. Tim was accordingly conducted thither before the gratings were put on, and left there, with his saucer of bread-and-milk, his mat, and no lack of company. In the morning nothing remained of him but gnawed bones and some scraps of grey fur.

It may be foolish to "bell the cat" on land, and must undoubtedly lessen its chance of catching its prey; but I am convinced that rats soon learn to associate the sound with the cat's whereabouts and to dread it, and that this keeps them at a greater distance. (By the way, it is remarkable with what wonderful skill and wariness a cat thus decorated will contrive to move without ringing, after a little practice.) I believe that poor Timmy would never have fallen a victim if I had not removed the little bell from his collar before he went below the hatches on that fatal night. It is said to be a capital plan to hang a little bell round a rat's neck and let him return to the place from whence he came, where, if all be true, he will frighten his messmates away like an evil spirit—or a good one. One can easily suppose that the apparition of a comrade, risen from the trap and come back from the other world with such a portent added to his personality, might well be discomposing to the nerves of his fellows. I knew of one that was treated in this way. We used to hear him at intervals for some months tinkling behind bulk-heads or underneath covering-boards, but I think the other rats accepted him as a case of some peculiar form of disease not contagious or infectious.

Marvellously cunning are rats in recognising devices for their capture. Toasted cheese and rank fish are the baits commonly employed, since the far penetrating odour of these lures them to the spot where the trap is set; but in places where they are so plentiful that their resort may be counted upon, nothing is so likely to induce them to enter as a bit of fruit or lettuce, of which they are passionately fond. Another very successful dodge for catching them in bulk is to strew a room liberally with some highly-seasoned thirst-producing food—salt cheese, for instance, or pepper-corns and

hemp-seed—and arrange a bucket of water in such a way, either by means of a tilting board or greased rim, that when they go to drink they may tumble in and be unable to get out again. A friend of mine asserts that no bait is so attractive to them as simple paper (they certainly seem to be very fond of it), and suggests that they would greedily devour blotting-paper impregnated with some fluid poison disguised with their favourite oil of anise. How this might be I do not know; but I should doubt it, considering what 'cute analytical noses these little toxicologists have; but it is worth trying. Deer and such-like animals are highly absorbent of paper. I knew a fellow who possessed a pet brocket that could do no wrong, until one day it went into his cabin and ate a number of five-dollar notes; since which he has looked upon the Cervidæ as a very inferior group, and genus *Cariacus* as distinctly immoral.

Rats are notoriously inimical to birds. Canaries and other similar feathered pets in cages are often destroyed by them, though parrots and all but the smallest paroquets appear to be able to keep the aggressors at bay. I have been tolerably fortunate in this respect on the whole, but I once lost by rats sixteen beautiful tanagers the first night I had them; the rats got into the bamboo cage readily enough, and if any of the birds escaped being eaten they flew away.

At the Zoological Gardens they are greatly troubled with rats and mice. Most visitors must have observed them here and there, even in the day-time, especially in the large enclosures, such as the kangaroos', where they almost vie with the sparrows in impudence while securing stray bits of bun, or about the cages of sleepy and nocturnal animals like the sloths and opossums close by. They are a serious nuisance, since, though they rarely kill anything, they disturb the creatures, particularly the birds, during the night. The very pretty characteristic grotto for the smaller waders and aquatic birds, which occupies the western end of the fish-house, has been emptied and entirely pulled to pieces and reconstructed twice on account of these torments.

Farm-yards suffer terribly from their ravages; I shall never forget the spectacle of a heap of nineteen young ducklings, which had not only been killed but carried from the coops to a space underneath some trestles in a cider-cellar,

a considerable journey involving a jump through a window four feet above the ground—all effected in a single night, and apparently by a very few rats, as the bodies were hardly mangled at all.

Whoever goes in for keeping pets of any description must be always on the look-out for rats, since, if the animals themselves do not prove objects of attraction, the food in their cages will. I once had one of those rare, exquisite, golden marmosets known as lion-monkeys (*Midas rosalia*), which I kept on a light chain with a swivel and travelling-ring in order that he might have plenty of exercise. Suddenly he took to breaking his chain night after night. Every morning he was discovered to be adrift, and as he was a tolerably tame though highly nervous monkey, I was puzzled to account for this, until I guessed rightly that he must have been startled by some marauding rat, prowling around his pannikin of rice. So the next night I baited a cage-trap and set it in the direct course that the intruder must take to reach his perch. But in the morning the chain was snapped and dangled vacantly from the ring as before, the pannikin was empty, and Leo was seated very comfortably in the rat-trap and had eaten up all the toasted cheese. A plucky little Merian's opossum (*Didelphys dorsigera*), however, acted very differently, and tore to pieces a rat twice as big as himself which had ventured into his box one night, although ordinarily the gentlest little beast imaginable, never requiring to be confined or biting anyone who handled him.

I was attempting to administer one of these vermin to a palm-viper once, but bungled in opening the trap, and the rat slipped away between the door and the aperture of the snake-case; so there was nothing for it but to replace the rugs over the latter (it was cold weather) with a general malediction on rats, traps, blankets, and vipers. A day or two afterwards, a strong savour, as of organic decomposition, arose. But where one has fifty or sixty live animals collected in a small cabin, with the port-hole screwed up and every cranny and ventilator carefully stuffed to keep out the cold during the last days of a homeward voyage, and moreover with the temperature artificially raised to the highest possible pitch, a few smells more or less don't count. This particular fragrance, however, grew so marked in its individuality, and so powerful and pre-eminent over the rest, that I became

interested at length, and sought for its origin. I noticed that it was exhaled most liberally when the hot water tins among the snake-boxes were refilled; this led me to examine the coverings, and there, sure enough, I discovered the rat between the layers of one of the rugs, greatly deteriorated since I last saw him. He had no doubt slipped in under the rug to hide, as it lay thrown aside in a careless heap, and had held on to it while I folded it up; then, unable to find his way out, he must have been stifled by the damp heat and want of air. A dead rat below par has a bouquet which is quite *sui generis* when you get it neat.

It is often said that a rat, caught by the tail in a gin, will bite that member through to escape when it hears approaching footsteps. I have never met with anyone who has witnessed such a thing, and it seems far from probable, since rats are great cowards in respect of physical pain. One can understand that a rat held by the end of the tail might break it involuntarily in the desperation of its fright and in its struggles to get away; but I have seen one caught by the extreme tip of the toe in a small bird-trap, and resort to no such surgery.

A lady was seated at the piano on board the Elbe one evening, when she suddenly crushed a tiny new-born rat under one of the pedals! I rather suspected the existence of a nest somewhere about there, as I had found a young one sprawling all alone on the carpet close by the same day, and had concluded that I had disturbed its mamma in the act of transferring it to some other retreat, causing her to abandon it and ensure her own safety in accordance with the unromantic, common-sense law which obtains throughout animated Nature whenever it comes to the point. After this little interlude, the fair pianiste resumed her playing, when presently she felt something running over her feet. Born in a land where enforced familiarity breeds contempt for all such trifles, and braver than most European young ladies would have shown themselves, she merely kicked it away twice; but she could not repress a small shriek when on looking down she beheld what she at first took to be a snake lying partly under the body of the instrument. It was only the old rat's tail projecting and lashing to and fro, but the mistake was not inexcusable; I think it was the biggest I ever saw. I had my foot on it instantly, and held it so until

somebody fetched an iron winch-handle and despatched it; the creature turned and buried its teeth in my boot, but it made no attempt to sever the link that bound it. Underneath the piano were two more young ones—a delicate banquet altogether for a certain hungry little wasp-snake.

Why do we not more frequently follow the snakes' example, and eat the rodents that so despitely use us? I don't suppose that many people would care about adding the denizens of our city sewers to their *ménu*, but what rational objection can there be to good, wholesome, barn-fed rats? They know what is good for themselves, depend upon it, and do not feed on offal and nastiness when better things are to be had. We eat ducks, and pigs, and crabs, and all sorts of fish, in comparison with which the rats are bright and blameless patterns of dietetic morality. I have tasted such, caught with snares down in a Kentish hop-garden—every one of them, no doubt, in its well-nourished maturity, representing the materials of a great many loaves of bread, and cakes, and pie-crusts, with some neighbouring farmer or miller as its creditor for no small sum in the aggregate; the flesh was as white as that of a chicken, and the flavour—well, I am afraid the highest praise I can award is that they had no flavour and were therefore unobjectionable. But then I had to cook them myself; no servant would touch them; and as my knowledge of the culinary art did not even include at that period those rough details with which my subsequent wanderings have perforce brought me acquainted, the process consisted simply of flaying, decapitation, curtailment, excavation, and twirling them in front of the grate by means of a bent pin and a piece of cord. Dressed with as much care as is bestowed on a snipe or woodcock, I am persuaded that they would be by no means an unworthy adjunct to the table. In China they are exposed for sale everywhere, split open, dried, pressed, and powdered with a finely-ground white bark, looking like haddocks, as they hang in long strings over the vendor's stall. We get tinned beef and mutton from all quarters of the globe, tinned oysters from America, tinned ox-tongues from the Plate, tinned kangaroo from Australia, why don't our Celestial friends send us their prepared rats, as they do their over-rated birds'-nest soup, in tins?

The Rev. B. Vernon, in his *Early Recollections of Jamaica*, tells us that the black slaves were in the habit of roasting and eating all the rats they could catch. I should think, however, that such a practice must have been exceptional or limited to a particular district, since negroes in these climates live principally upon fruits and vegetables, and if pressed by want of animal food, would find it, one would think, without resorting to vermin, in the birds, fish, molluscs, crustaceans, and edible reptiles with which such regions abound. But it seems extraordinary that a prejudice against this ever-present supply of fresh meat should exist at sea, even among crews who are rotting with scurvy bred of salt provisions, while the rats are quietly battenning on their peas and biscuit.

Several Arctic voyagers have given us an account of the benefit derived from their consumption. Dr. Kane taught his men to shoot them with blunt arrows, then boil them, mince them up, roll the meat into balls with melted tallow, and keep them frozen until they were required. But although he himself attributes his comparative immunity from scurvy to their use, in most of these instances their value as food seems only to have been recognised when the crews were in imminent danger of starvation, or suggested by the amusement of hunting the little poachers during the long night.

What tremendous noises rats are capable of producing! It is much easier to understand that they should have given a reputation of being haunted to many a house by their unearthly clatter and simulation of footsteps, sweeping of garments, and other sounds, than to divine how so much uproar can be caused by such tiny agents. I believe it is in great measure due to their propensity for seizing and shaking every moveable point they get hold of; it is marvellous, too, what heavy bodies they will drag about—and all, very often, without any apparent reason beyond sheer wanton playfulness. Four white rats, confined in a shallow box, the lid of which was rather loose, occasioned their owner to get up twice in the middle of the night under the impression that thieves were breaking into his house, though he knew the rats were down below; and there is no doubt that a great many well-authenticated ghosts are susceptible of being laid with phosphor-paste, or exorcised by means of a bit of toasted cheese.

GENTLEMANLY JOE.

A STORY.

THAT was the name by which he was known in the banking-house of Ducat, Gulden, and Ducat, or at least in that branch of it which did a thriving business in the great commercial city of Birchespool. It did not require more than five minutes' acquaintance, however, to inform the uninitiated that the apparently complimentary epithet was bestowed rather from a keen sense of humour on the part of his five fellow-clerks, than on account of any exceptional claims to blue blood in the case of Mr. Joseph Smith himself. Even the casual customer, whose knowledge of Joe was limited to watching his self-satisfied smirk and enormous watch-guard, at the other side of the shining mahogany desk, or admiring the emphasis with which he utilised his moistened thumb in overcoming the gregarious leaves of his ledger, must have been struck by the misappropriate epithet. To us, however, who had, so to say, sat at his feet and marvelled at the war of independence which he was carrying on against the Queen's English—a guerilla warfare consisting in attacks upon aspirates, and the cutting off of straggling g's—to us our fanciful sobriquet was a joke of the first water. If anything could have enhanced our enjoyment of it, it was the innocent gravity with which our companion accepted the doubtful title, and, after one feeble remonstrance, adopted it for ever as his own prerogative and right.

The circumstances of that remonstrance deserve to be recorded. Before the arrival of Mr. Joseph Smith from the paternal training-stables—his father was a successful sporting tout who had developed into a trainer—our office had been a particularly aristocratic one. Welstead, our senior clerk, was a fine handsome young fellow of twenty-six, who came of a good Scotch strain, and was occasionally understood to make dark allusions concerning the extinct Earldom of Stirling. Dullan and Moreby were Oxford men, well-connected and well-read; Little Sparkins was the son of a High Church clergyman; and I had some of the best blood of Wales in my veins. No wonder, then, that our dignity was hurt by the appearance of a loudly-dressed scorbutic-looking youth, with horse-shoe pin, and a necktie suggestive of spectrum analysis, upon the very stool lately vacated by my old college friend Vernon Hawkins

—most gentlemanly and quiet of mankind.

For a few days we contented ourselves with observing the habits and customs of the creature. There was an audacity about his vulgarity, and a happy unconsciousness of all offence, which fairly disarmed criticism. It was not until he began to address us as "old pals," and went the length of playing a small practical joke upon little Sparkins, that a spirit of resistance began to stir within our bosoms, and that Welstead, as usual, was pushed forward as our mouthpiece.

"You see, Smith," he remarked in his most languid tones, "you have been in our office for a comparatively short period, and yet you have taught us many things which were new to us. There is a natural buoyancy about your character which points you out as one calculated to shine in the most select circles. Before your arrival we had never learned to designate ladies as 'fillies,' nor had we heard of the 'real gents' whom you mention as having frequented your father's establishment. These things interest and please us. Allow us to show some small sense of the honour your society confers upon us, by christening you as 'Gentlemanly Joe,' excusing the liberty we take with your name in consideration of the alliteration."

A great part of this speech must have been lost upon Mr. Joseph, but never did elaborate sarcasm fall so utterly flat. Instead of being offended, as we had fondly hoped would be the case, he burst into an uproarious fit of laughter, and slapped his gaitered leg with the ebony ruler as a token of delight. "Haw! haw!" he roared, writhing about on the top of the high stool. "Whatever'll father say! Oh, law, to think of it! 'Gentlemanly Joe'—eh? You're right, though; you're right, and not ashamed to own up neither. I said when I was comin' up, 'Father,' says I, 'I'll teach them a trick or two,' and I have, hain't I? Of course we're all gents here, for clerks is mostly reckoned such, but it do make a difference when a man has been brought in contac' with the real thing. You can call me Gentlemanly Joe, an' pleasure, but not as meaning to imply that there is any in this room not such, though, maybe, not one of you has seen a belted hurl give your father one in the short ribs and holler out, 'You're a deep old scoundrel, Smith, and one as knows how many beans makes five!'"

Welstead's face at the idea of his gouty

and dyspeptic governor receiving such an attention at the hands of nobility was so ludicrous that we all burst into a roar of laughter, which ended our first and last attempt to take a serious rise out of our bucolic companion. It is true that his life was spent under a continual shower of small jokes and chaff, and that his new name superseded his old one, but there was a massive simplicity about the man, and a marvellous power of converting the most unpromising remarks into compliments, which rendered him a very disconcerting individual to attack. Allusions to his hat, necktie, or any other peculiarity of raiment were met by his eternal horse-laugh, and an earnest recommendation that we should allow him to send down to the country and procure fac-similes for all and each of us. "You hain't got nothin' spicy in Birchespool," he would remark. "Lord, I know a place at 'ome where you can get your collars spotted over with fox's 'eads instead of bein' plain white, which is a poor colour at the best." I think he imagined that it was nothing but want of money which induced us to refuse to purchase these and other luxuries, and he was wont to throw out allusions as to "it's not costing us nothink," while he jingled the loose coins in his trouser-pockets.

Town life did not improve Joseph. On the contrary he deteriorated. During the first six months that he honoured the office with his presence, he not only lost none of the traits which he had brought with him from his father's stables, but he grafted upon them everything which is objectionable in the city snob. The premonitory symptoms were a suspicious waxiness of the half-dozen hairs which adorned his upper-lip, and the appearance of a large diamond-ring with a greenish and vitreous hue. His next venture was an eye-glass; and he finally launched forth into a light ulster, decorated with a large black check, which gave him the appearance of being inside a cage, with his head projecting at one end and his feet at the other. "It's a proper thing for a gent to wear," he remarked. "When you see a get-up like this you knows at a glance who's a cad and who ain't"—a sentiment which we all very cordially endorsed.

In spite of these peculiarities we learned not only to tolerate the Gentleman, but even to like him. Indeed, we hardly knew how strong this feeling was until he betook himself into the country on a fortnight's leave, carrying with him ulster, eye-glass, ring, and everything else which

was calculated to impress the rustics and stamp him as the natural associate of the "belted hurl." He left quite a vacancy behind him. There was a dead level of equality about the five of us which deprived life of all its piquancy. Even Welstead, who had disliked him from the first, was fain to confess that he was good fun, and that he wished him back. After all, if his laugh was obtrusive it was hearty, and his quaint, vulgar face had sincerity and good-nature stamped upon every line of it. It was with unaffected pleasure that we heard a loud view-halloa in the street one morning just after the opening of the doors, and saw our friend swaggering in, more ugly, more dressy, and, if possible, more vulgar than before.

Newsome, our bank manager, was an excellent fellow, and on the best terms with all of us. As we were all single men, with a very limited circle of friends in Birchespool, he kindly gave us the run of his house, and it was seldom that a week passed without our enjoying a musical evening there, winding up with one of the choice little suppers for which Mrs. Newsome was celebrated. On these occasions, since distinctions would be invidious, Gentlemanly Joe used to be present in all his glory, with a very large white-frilled shirt-front, and another vitreous fragment sparkling gloomily in the middle of it. This, with a watch-chain which reminded one of the chain cable of a schooner, was his sole attempt at ornamentation, for, as he used to say, "It ain't good form to show you're richer than your neighbours, even if you are. Too much like a Sheeny, don't you know?"

Joe was an endless source of amusement to Cissy Newsome, a mischievous, dark-eyed little brunette of eighteen, the sole child of the manager. We had all fallen in love with Cissy at one time or another, but had had to give it up on finding that her heart was no longer her own to bestow. Charles Welstead had known her from childhood, and the affection of early youth had ripened into love on both sides. Never was there a more fondly attached couple, nor one to whom the path seemed to lie so smoothly, for old Welstead had been Newsome's personal friend, and Charles's prospects were of the brightest.

On these pleasant evenings which I have mentioned, it was great fun to see Joe darting into the drawing-room and endeavouring to secure a seat in the neighbourhood of the young lady, with a p-

found disregard for any claims her parents might have upon his courtesy. If he attained the coveted position he would lean back in his chair with what he imagined to be an air of easy gentility, and regale her with many anecdotes of horses and dogs, with occasional reminiscences of the "big nobs" who had had professional relations with his father. On such occasions Miss Cissy would imitate him to his face in the most amusing way, looking all the time as demure as a little mouse, while Welstead leaned up against the piano, not quite sure whether to laugh or be angry. Even he usually broke down, however, when the two came to discuss "hetiquette," and Joe, in his character of gentleman, laid down his views as to when a "feller should raise 'is 'at," and when not. The argument was generally closed by a burst of laughter from all of us, in which Joseph would join, though protesting loudly that he was unable to see the joke.

It is a proverbially dangerous thing to play with edged tools. I have never been sure whether Smith knew how matters stood between Welstead and the young lady. I am inclined to think that at first he did not. Perhaps, if some one had informed him of it then, he might have mastered his feelings, and much misery have been averted. It was clear to us young fellows who had gone through the same experience how things were tending, but we held our tongues rather than spoil what we considered a capital joke. Cissy may have seen it too, and given him a little mischievous encouragement—at least, young ladies have the credit of not being blind in such cases. Certainly Smith pursued his hopeless suit with a vigour which astonished us. During business hours he lived in a sort of day-dream, musing upon his perch like some cogitative fowl, and getting into endless trouble over his accounts, while every evening found him interfering with Welstead's tête-à-tête at the high corner house in Eldon Street.

At last the crash came. There was no need to ask what had happened, when little Joe slunk quietly into the office one morning with dishevelled hair, melancholy face, and eyes bleared with the wakefulness of a restless night. We never learnt the particulars of his dismissal. Suffice it that he was informed once and for ever that a gap which there was no crossing lay between Miss Cissy Newsome and himself. He bore up bravely, and tried to hug his sorrow to his heart, and hide it from the

vulgar gaze of mankind, but he became an altered man. What had been but a passing fancy with us, had taken root in his very soul and grown there, so that he, who had hardly known when it was planted, was now unable to wrench it out. The ordeal he had gone through chastened him to a great extent from his vulgarity by toning down his natural spirits, and though he occasionally ventured upon a "Haw! haw!" it was painfully artificial, and a good deal more suggestive of a dirge than of merriment. The worst feature of his case was that every week increased the gloom which hung over him. We began to suspect that our estimate of his character had been a superficial one, and that there were depths in the little man's soul of whose existence we had been ignorant.

Four months had passed away. None of us had changed much during that time, with the exception of the Gentleman. We saw little of him except in office hours. Where he spent the rest of the day was a mystery. Once I met him late at night in the docks, stumbling along among ring-bolts and chains, careless of the fact that a trip or slip might send him into eternity. Another time I saw a cloaked figure lurking in the shadow beside the house in Eldon Street, which fled round the corner on my approach. His naturally unhealthy complexion had become so cadaverous, that the sandy eyebrows and moustache stood out quite dark against it. His clothes hung loosely on his figure. The eye-glass was discarded. Even the once gorgeous ring seemed to have assumed a sombre and melancholy lustre, as if in sympathy with the feelings of its owner. His manner had lost all its old audacity, and become timid and retiring. I doubt if any of his rustic acquaintances would have recognised their gaudy Joseph in the shambling unkempt figure which haunted the counting-house of Ducat, Gulden, and Ducat.

The termination of Welstead's engagement began to draw near. It had been arranged that after his marriage he was to be promoted to the management of another branch in a distant part of the country. This approaching break-up in our little circle drew us all closer together, and made us the more sorry that the general harmony should be destroyed by the unhappiness of one of our number. If we could have cheered him we would, but there was something in his look, for all his snobbishness, which forbade even sympathy on a

subject so sacred. He endeavoured to put on a careless manner when he joined us all in wishing Welstead good luck at mid-day on the Saturday preceding the Monday on which the wedding was to take place. We expected then that we should not see our fellow-clerk again until he appeared in the character of bridegroom. How little did we guess the catastrophe which was impending!

I remember that Saturday evening well. It was in January, and a clear wintry sky, with a suspicion of an aurora in its northern quarter, spread over the great city. There was a slight frost in the air, and the ground clinked cheerily under foot. One of my fellow-clerks—Dullan—and I had kept by little Smith all day, for there was a wild look about his eyes which made us think it might be unsafe to leave him to his own devices. We dined at a restaurant, and afterwards dropped into a theatre, where Joe's ghastly face in the stalls had a very depressing effect upon the pantomime. We were walking slowly homewards after supper, it being then between twelve and one, when we saw a great crimson glow upon the heavens, such as aurora never threw, and a fire-engine dashed past us with a whistle and a clang, the big-boned shaggy horses whirling it along at such a rate that we only caught a glimpse of a flash of lights and a cluster of bearded, helmeted heads suspended, as it were, in the darkness.

I have always had a weakness for fires. There is something grand and ennobling in the irresistible sweep of a great volume of flame. I could moralise over a conflagration as Chateaubriand did over Niagara. Dullan is of the same bent of mind, and the Gentleman was ready to turn anywhere from his own thoughts. We all began running in the direction of the blaze.

At first we ran languidly, jogging along with many other people who were hurrying towards the same goal. Then, as we came into a quarter of the town which we knew well, we almost involuntarily quickened our pace, until, tearing round a familiar corner at racing speed, we pulled up, and gazed silently into each other's pale faces. There, not a hundred yards from us, stood the high house of Eldon Street—the house under whose hospitable roof we had spent so many happy hours—with the red flames licking round the whole lower storey, and spurting out of every chink and crevice, while a dense pall of

smoke obscured the upper windows and the roof.

We dashed through the crowd together, and fought our way to the clear space on which the firemen were connecting their hose. As we reached them, a half-naked man, bare-footed and dishevelled, was pleading with the superintendent, clutching frantically at his arm, and pointing up into the dark clouds above him, already rent with jagged streaks of ascending flame.

"Too short!" he screamed in a voice which we were horrified to recognise as that of Mr. Newsome. "It can't be—it mustn't be! There are more escapes than one. Oh, man, man, she is burning—choking—suffocating! Do something! Save her! My child—my beautiful child—the only one I have!"

In the agony of his fear, he fell at the fireman's feet and implored his assistance.

I was paralysed by the horror of the thing. The situation was apparent at a glance. There, seen dimly through the smoke, was Cissy Newsome's window, while beneath it, separated by a broad expanse of wall, was the head of the fire-escape. It was too short by a good twelve feet. The whole lower storey was one seething mass of fire, so that there seemed no possibility of approach from that direction. A horrible feeling of impotence came over me. There was no sign of movement at the young lady's window, though crawling trails of flame had climbed up to it and festooned it round with their red garlands. I remember hoping in my heart that she had been suffocated in her sleep, and had never awoken to the dreadful reality.

I have said that we were paralysed for the moment. The spell was rapidly broken. "This way, lads!" cried a resolute voice, and Charley Welstead broke in among us with a fireman's hatchet in his hand. We pushed after him as he rushed round to the rear of the house, where there was a door usually used by the servants. It was locked, but a couple of blows shattered it to pieces. We hurried up the stone kitchen stairs, with the plaster falling in strips all round us, and the flags so hot that they burned into the soles of our boots. At the head of the stairs there was a second door, thicker and stronger than the first, but nearly charred through by the fire.

"Give me room!" gasped Welstead, swinging round his axe.

"Don't do it, sir," cried a stalwart fireman, seizing him by the wrist; "there's flames on the other side of that door."

"Let me go!" roared Charley.

"We're dead men if you break it!"

"Let me go!"

"Drop it, sir; drop it!"

There was a momentary struggle, and the axe clattered down upon the stone steps. It had hardly time to fall before some one caught it up. I could not see who for the dense blue reek of smoke. A man dashed past the fireman, there was the crash of a parting lock, and a great lick of flame, like a hound unleashed, shot out and enveloped us. I felt its hot sear as it coiled round my face, and I remember nothing more until I found myself leaning against the door-post, breathing in the fresh sweet air of night, while Welstead, terribly burned, struggled furiously with the fireman who held him back to prevent him from reascending the staircase, which was now a solid sheet of fire.

"Hold back, sir!" I heard the honest fellow growl; "ain't one life thrown away enough? That little cove—him with the gaiters—the same what broke the door—he's gone. I seed him jump right slap into the middle of it. He won't never come back no more!"

Together we led Welstead round to the front once more, all three staggering like drunken men. The flames were higher than before, but the upper storey and the roof still rose above them like a black island in a sea of fire. There was Miss Cissy's window dark and unopened, though the woodwork around it was in a glow. There was no sign of the flutter of a female dress. How terrible it was to stand and wait for the end, powerless to stretch out a saving hand. Poor Welstead leaned against me, sobbing like a child. A ghastly longing came into my heart that I might see flames in that room, that I might know it to be all over, and her pain and trouble at an end. Then I heard the crash of glass falling outwards, and I bent my head to avoid seeing the very thing that I had wished for; and then there broke upon my ear a shout from ten thousand voices, so wildly exultant and madly jubilant that I never hope to hear the like again.

Welstead and I looked up. Balanced upon the narrow ledge outside the window I had been watching, there was standing a man, framed as it were in fire. His clothes were hanging around him as a few tattered charred rags, and his very hair was in a

blaze. The draught caused by knocking out the window had encouraged the flames, so that a lurid curtain hung behind him, while the ground was fully seventy feet below. Yet there, on the thin slip of stone, with Eternity on each side of him, stood Joe Smith, the uncouth and ungrammatical, tying two sheets together, while women sobbed below and men shouted, and every hand was raised to bless him. He staggered and disappeared so suddenly that we feared he had fallen, but he was back again in an instant, not alone this time, for the girl he had come to save was slung over his shoulder. The brave fellow seemed to have doubts of the strength of his impromptu rope, for he rested his own weight upon the nearly red-hot water-pipe during those twelve perilous feet, supporting Miss Newsome by the arm which clutched the sheet. Slowly, very slowly they descended, but at last his feet touched the topmost rung of the escape. Was it a dream that I heard a voice high above me say, "Hall right, missy," before a burst of cheering rang out which drowned every other sound.

Miss Cissy, more frightened than hurt, was delivered over into her half-distracted father's care, while I helped to lift Gentlemanly Joe from the escape. He lay panting upon the ground, burned and scorched, his sporting coat tattered and charred, while, strangely enough, the prismatic necktie and horse-shoe pin had escaped the general destruction, so as to present an absurd oasis amid the desert around. He lay without speaking or moving until Cissy Newsome was led past him on her way to a cab. Then he made a feeble gesture with his hand, which indicated that he wished to speak with her, and she stooped over him. No other ear but mine caught that whisper.

"Don't fret, miss," he said, "'cause it was the wrong hoss came in. He's a good fellar—a deal better than me—and did as much, but hadn't the luck."

A vulgar little speech, but Cissy's eyes got very moist as she listened, and I'm not sure that mine didn't too.

The office was sadly reduced after that. With Welstead and the Gentleman on the sick-list, there were only four of us at the desk, and the reaction from the excitement had left us anything but lively. I can remember only one remark ventured upon during that first day. The dreary scratching of pens had lasted unbroken for over an hour, when little Sparkins looked up from his ledger.

"I suppose you would call him a gentleman after all," he said.

"A very much better one than you will ever be," growled Dullan, and we relapsed into the scratching of pens.

I was present at the wedding of Charley Welstead and Cissy Newsome, when, after a long delay, it was finally celebrated. By the original arrangement I was to have figured as best man, but my post of honour was handed over to a certain very ugly young man whose appearance suggested the idea that he had spent the last few weeks in a mustard-poultice. Unromantic as it may seem, this youth not only went through his duties with all the nonchalance in the world, but danced at the subsequent festivities with the greatest vigour and grace. It is commonly rumoured that this activity of his, combined with sundry interesting anecdotes concerning horses and dogs, have so prevailed upon the heart of a susceptible young lady, that there is every probability of our having a repetition of the marriage ceremony. Should it be so, I trust that I may at last revert to my original position as best man.

THE NIGHTINGALES.

Do you forget the starry light,
The glory of the southern night;
The wooing of the scented breeze,
That rustled all the shadowy trees;
The tinkling of the falling streams,
That mingled with our waking dreams;
And, echoing from the wooded vales,
The nightingales, the nightingales?
Do you forget how passing fair,
The Moorish palace nestled there,
With arch, and roof, and coign, and niche,
In carven beauty rare and rich;
With court, and hall, and corridor,
Where we two lingered, o'er and o'er,
While blent with old romantic tales
The music of the nightingales?
Do you forget the glowing noon,
When by the fountain's rhythmic tune,
We talked of all that once had been,
And peopled the calm lovely scene,
With stately forms of elder times,
Of history's lore, and poet's rhymes,
And feats o'er which our fancy pales;
And thrilled through all, the nightingales?
Do you forget those evening hours,
Laden with breath of orange flowers?
When we, from ruddy ramparts gazing,
Saw the snow peaks in sunset blazing;
While Darro sang his ceaseless song,
Sweeping his aloe banks along;
And leaning on the gallery rails,
We listened to the nightingales?
And in the flush of dying day
Down, far below, Granada lay;
While chiming from her hundred towers,
Her bells pealed out the vesper hours;
And in the soft warm scented hush,
The Vega smiled through roseate blush;
And, ringing through her flowery vales,
Rose up the song of nightingales.

Do you forget? The wakening year,
Is grey and cold and dreary here;
Needs but to close our tired eyes,
And see the lovely pageant rise;
Of fairy halls, and rose-crowned hills,
And sweeping elms and dancing rills;
And, ere the sunny vision pales,
Once more to hear the nightingales.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. VII. OUR FARMER.

SIMON DEVEREL, of Cobb Hall Farm, was our farmer par excellence in Shillingbury. There was Mr. Dredge, of White Olland, and Mr. Bullen, of Carbury, and both of these farmed much more land than Simon Deverel; but they were always Mr. Dredge and Mr. Bullen, whilst honest Simon was always Farmer Deverel and nothing else. When I first remember him he was a tall man of forty-five or thereabouts, lean and weather-beaten, with a slight stoop in his shoulders. He was good-looking, with a mass of richly curling brown hair, regular features, which would have been handsome if the elements had been less churlish, and deep, dark-brown eyes, always very tender, and often melancholy in their expression. His voice was low and gentle, and a pleasant one to listen to, though he always spoke in the richest vernacular. In short, a better-tempered, kinder-hearted fellow than Farmer Deverel did not live in all the county.

Simon had married early; but he had been a widower many years when I first knew him. His short married life had not been a happy one, and there were reports that his wife had been a lazy slattern who had killed herself with gin-drinking. Then Simon took back, to rule his house, his mother, who had gone away when the wife was brought home. There had been much bitterness of feeling and many hard words when the old woman had taken her departure. She had lived for fifteen years and more with her own mother-in-law, and she couldn't see why what had been good enough for her should not be good enough for her daughter-in-law; but the young woman's tongue was as sharp as the old one's; and, as she had behind her the support of her husband, the mother had to turn out. She went to a cottage in an adjoining village, and neither saw nor spoke to her son from the day she quitted his roof to the day when he came to her door in his mourning black, and asked her to come back to him. Very little passed between them on that occasion; and, if

the widower's heart was sore, it certainly found very little balm in the words which fell from his mother's lips. In the end she consented to return; everything would go to rack and ruin else; but she let poor Simon see pretty plainly that she meant to be both master and mistress in his house.

Mrs. Deverel was indeed a terrible old woman, and I used to wonder how it was she could ever have been mother to such a man as Simon. He certainly must have "favoured" her less than he did his father. She was bent-backed, with a trick of carrying her head on one side, and she always wore, winter or summer, out of doors or in, an enormous black coal-scuttle bonnet. To look at her face to face was like looking at a wild beast at the end of a burrow; and, in spite of the shade of the bonnet, her wicked old eyes would flash and her yellow teeth gleam in a way that would make me shudder. Aided by a village girl, who came "meat for manners," she did all the house-work and dairy besides. What a life that luckless handmaiden must have led! No one was ever known to stay more than the year; but in spite of her sharp tongue Mrs. Deverel never had any difficulty in "suiting herself" at hiring-time. She was an excellent cook and housekeeper, and taught her girls so well, that any one who could say she lived a year at Cobb Hall Farm would be almost sure to get a place with some of the gentry round about.

Cobb Hall was a good mile from the parish church. Behind it there rose a bit of open down, crested by a belt of the finest Scotch firs in the county. On one side lay Simon's eighty acres of arable land; and in front of the house, stretching down to the river, was as pretty a range of meadows as one could wish to see. The farmhouse itself was pleasantly placed. The down behind it was just high enough to keep off the spring north-easters. Some fine horse-chestnuts stood on the green in front, which was bordered by a large pond, where, all through the spring and summer, ducklings and goslings of all ages swam and dived; and a good old-fashioned garden stretched away from the southern gable of the house. Inside, the spacious kitchen served both as working-room and living-room. There Mrs. Deverel's authority was more dire and tyrannous than in any other part of the establishment; and there her son took all his meals, napped, and read his newspaper. There

was a best parlour, of course, but this was as inviolable as best parlours always are; and the best bedroom over it had never been slept in since Simon's great-aunt had died in it while on a visit some fifteen years ago.

But I have not set about my story just to describe Farmer Deverel's house and lands. There was a tale connected with Cobb Hall Farm, the ending of which had probably something to do with that sad look in Farmer Deverel's eyes, and this is the tale I have to tell.

One day our doctor—Dr. Goldingham—drove up to Cobb Hall and asked to see the farmer. No one but Mrs. Deverel was at home, and she offered to convey any message to her son; but Dr. Goldingham knew perfectly the ins and outs of the household, and knew, moreover, that the matter of business he had in hand was one which he had better discuss with Simon alone in the first instance. So he left his gig, and went in search of the farmer, who was hoeing turnips in a field close by.

There was hardly a man, woman, or child within five miles of the place who was not under an obligation of some kind or other to the doctor, and Simon's debt to him dated back some years, and was one which could not be paid in coin. It was a debt of those days when the wretched drunken wife was bringing shame upon his home; and, though the first summer leveret and the finest Christmas turkey had gone from Cobb Hall to the doctor's house ever since, Simon still felt himself a debtor. Now, as he saw the doctor walking along under the hedge, he straightened his back and started off to meet him, and the two stood in close conversation for half an hour and more.

Mrs. Deverel stood glaring after the doctor as he walked away, declining to leave his message in her keeping. She was probably the only person in Shillingbury who would have said an ill word of him; but that was nothing wonderful, seeing that Mrs. Deverel spoke little else but ill words. She went muttering about the house, only raising her voice when she caught sight of her handmaiden; but when Simon came in sight, with his hoe on his shoulder, her curiosity could hold out no longer, and she shuffled out across the yard to meet him.

"So the doctor have been pratin' round along o' you! What do he want?"

"If you come in, and sit ye down a minute, I'll tell ye," answered Simon.

"No, if you have owt to say, as you

don't want blathered all over the town, you'd better say it here. That trumpery wench is the worst eavesdropper I ever had."

"Well, just as you like. Let's sit down here, I'm a bit tired."

"Tired, indeed! Men are a nice set nowadays. I wonder whether your father would ha' been tired with half a day's tannup hoein', and half o' that spent with talkin' with that gossipin' old doctor."

"The doctor have had a letter from a Lunnon doctor, who wants to send a patient down into the country for a bit, and he thowt our place might do, so he cam' and axed me if I'd undertake the job."

"I'm thinkin' he might ha' cam' to me; seein' as I manage the house. That doctor, as you all make so much fuss about, think a sight too much of hisself."

"He ha' been a good friend to me, mother, and I'll never look off bein' a sarvus to him."

"I care nowt for that. Since I warn't good enough to be axed, let me tell you as I'll have none o' his rubbish here."

"The doctor wants me to take the—the invalid in, 'cos he thowt we had some nice rooms as we never use, and 'cos he knowed as you was a tidy cook. That's what he say; but I know well enough he was a thinkin' how he could do me a good turn. The pay is fifty shillin's a week."

"Let him take his invalids somewhere else," said the old woman; but her voice and eye were less truculent than before.

"Last year was a main bad 'un," said Simon, "and a job like this 'ud come in mighty handy; but that a'n't it, mother. I don't often say a word, but now I do say that I'm goin' to have the people here. The doctor wants 'em to come, and that's enough."

"The people—and how many on 'em is there, I should like to know?" she said, with her voice quavering; for there was a frown on Simon's brow which did not often sit there; and Mrs. Deverel, shrew as she was, always hesitated to cross him when she saw that frown.

"There's two on 'em, and you've got to get the parlour and bedroom ready to-morrow. They'll be here about half-past four. There's a lady and a little gell o' five."

"Women folk! They give a sight more trouble than men. Well, if you'll ha't so, so 't must be; but don't blame me if you prove to be a fool for your pains."

The next afternoon, when the fly from

the Black Bull drove up to the farm, Simon was all in readiness to welcome his guests; though his mother declared that, if she warn't good enough to settle the strangers in their rooms, she warn't good enough to cook for 'em neither.

Simon lifted the little girl out of the carriage, and helped the lady herself to descend. She was tall, with a well-proportioned figure, but there was about her a stoop and languor which told surely of physical weakness. As a girl she must have been pretty, but her beauty was fast fading, though she could not have been more than twenty-five, and there was a look upon her face which seemed to show that care as well as sickness had helped to mar the smoothness of her brow and hollow her rounded cheeks. Still her manner was bright and friendly, as she thanked Simon for his courtesy and praised the rooms which had been prepared for her.

When once Mrs. Deverel had seen that Simon was in one of his rare moods of obstinacy, she had given way at once, determined that no reproach should lie upon her for anything. The rooms were as bright and clean as human labour and beeswax could make them, and the roast fowl which was served to the lady for tea was such a fowl as I have often sighed for when doing battle with the leathery *poulet au cresson* at the tail end of a foreign table d'hôte.

The lady's name was Mrs. Sutcliffe, the wife of Captain Sutcliffe, R.A., and the next morning she handed over to Simon fifty pounds in bank-notes to keep for her and pay himself for her entertainment. The doctor called that afternoon as a friend, not professionally, for he explained to Mrs. Sutcliffe that he had heard from Dr. Cooper, who had sent her down, enough to convince him that she wanted no rubbish in the way of physic. Mrs. Deverel's cooking, and the air on the downs, would soon make her as strong as she ever had been.

And before Mrs. Sutcliffe had been a month at the farm it was clear that the doctor was right. She grew better and stronger in every way, and little Alice, too, throve marvellously. The little maid took a wonderful fancy for Simon, who returned her affection with interest. Wherever he might be at work Miss Alice would always insist on being taken to him about eleven, so that she might ride home either on Simon's shoulder, or in front of him on the cart-horse. As the weather became hot in the July days, Mrs. Sutcliffe would spend the

morning sitting amongst the fir-trees up on the down. The air was sweet with the scent of wild flowers, and there was always a fresh breeze playing amid the tree-trunks. Simon would often walk round by the fir-trees on his way home, to hear whether she would like anything sent up to her, or whether he might carry her stool and books home for her. Soon he got into the habit of staying till Mrs. Sutcliffe was ready to return to her early dinner, and then he would walk back by her side, carrying little Alice on his shoulder, and Mrs. Sutcliffe's various impedimenta in his disengaged hand.

As she grew stronger Mrs. Sutcliffe became talkative and almost gay; but had it not been for Simon she would have had no one to talk to, for she had never got over her first fear of Mrs. Deverel's glowering eyes and harsh voice. She would talk readily enough about her young days and her father and mother; but Simon noticed that she rarely mentioned her husband or her home. At last she became more confidential, and told Farmer Deverel that she was a farmer's daughter herself, and had been bred and born in just such another house as Cobb Hall—an old house in Norfolk standing in that lonely district where Marshland ends and Thetford Warren begins. The captain had come down for the shooting and had fallen in love with her. Her father didn't like the match and wanted her to marry a neighbour of theirs, but she had determined to have her own way. As she made this confession, Mrs. Sutcliffe gave a little sigh, and Simon, as he looked at her, felt a strong suspicion that she had repented ere this of that determination, and that "the neighbour" was the man she ought to have married, and not the captain. Simon found that he could talk to his guest with much less reserve when he knew she was not a fine lady, but a farmer's daughter, just as he himself was a farmer's son.

One day Dr. Goldingham drove up to the farm, and with a very grave face asked to see Mrs. Sutcliffe. She was in the garden, with her books and parasol in her hand ready to go up to the fir trees, and the doctor took her by the hand and led her indoors.

Simon went round by the downs that morning on his way back to dinner, but no living creature was there save the rabbits, who toppled heels over head into their holes as he approached. He felt disappointed, and the walk home seemed dull and cheerless. When he reached the farmstead the first person he saw was

Dr. Goldingham without his hat, working violently to fill a pail with water from the pump in the yard. "Bring the water along here quick, Simon," he said as he rushed through the door leading to Mrs. Sutcliffe's room.

She was lying in a deadly swoon upon the sofa. The doctor bade Simon go at once to Shillingbury to fetch a nurse and some drugs. She was put to bed in a half-unconscious state, and for the next three weeks she lay in imminent danger.

It was a heavy task the doctor had to perform that morning when he led her back into the house. A letter had come to him from an officer at Woolwich, saying that Captain Sutcliffe had the day before gone off with the wife of a gentleman living in the neighbourhood. The affair had caused great scandal, for, though it was known that Captain and Mrs. Sutcliffe had not been living very happily, it was hardly expected that their disagreements would terminate so disastrously. The writer ended by begging that Dr. Goldingham would convey the news to the unhappy lady before it should come to her ears by common report.

It soon came to light that Sutcliffe was deep in debt, and had left his wife penniless. The guilty pair were traced on board a vessel bound for the Cape, and in the course of time it was reported that Sutcliffe had volunteered for service in one of the interminable wars between the Kafirs and the Europeans.

The poor woman recovered very slowly from the shock. All the progress she had made was lost; and, when she managed again to walk out in the garden, she was as pale as, or paler, than before. There was her great sorrow, of course, to vex her; but, besides this, there was another which gave her deep discomfort. She had now been almost six months at the farm, and, what with the charge for her board and lodging and what she owed the doctor, her fifty pounds would be more than gone.

One day she took the doctor into her confidence, and was surprised to find from him that professional etiquette forbade him to receive a farthing from her; he was simply attending for his friend, Dr. Cooper, who would, no doubt, send in his bill in due time. Still she was most uneasy. She knew she must be taking some steps to quit the quiet nook where she had been so happy until the crash had come; and how to begin she could not tell.

One day she opened the subject with the

farmer; but he told her not to worry herself, for he would let her know as soon as the fifty pounds was done. He meant to charge her for just what she ate, and as yet she hadn't got through ten pounds of it.

At last one day a startling piece of news reached us, viz., that Captain Sutcliffe had been killed in South Africa. The doctor made full enquiries, and, according to the reply he received, there seemed to be no doubt that Mrs. Sutcliffe was a widow. The poor woman grieved and fretted at first, but it was hardly possible that her sorrow for a husband who was already dead to her, and who had wronged her so deeply, could be lasting. She roused herself and set to work to pack her boxes, to go out into the world and earn a living for her child and herself. The doctor made interest on her behalf with his friend, Dr. Cooper, and before long he was able to tell her that she might have the post of assistant-matron at a convalescent home on the southern coast if she liked to accept it.

Mrs. Sutcliffe was overjoyed at the news, for of late the goblin wolf of poverty had haunted her day and night; but when she told her good fortune to Farmer Deverel, his honest face fell, and a look of heartfelt sorrow came into his eyes. For the next week he scarcely saw her. He was early to work and late home, and hardly spoke a word to anyone. One day Mrs. Sutcliffe went to meet him, as she saw him coming home to his dinner across the meadow.

"Mr. Deverel, I haven't seen you since Sunday to speak to. I suppose you are busy getting ready for wheat-sowing?"

"Yes, ma'am, I've been rather busy lately."

"You used to laugh at my Norfolk farming. Now I believe more than half the wheat there is sown by this time."

A quaint smile came over Simon's handsome face—not a smile of joy—at this allusion to their old talk on the downs; but he said nothing.

Mrs. Sutcliffe went on:

"It's getting rather cold to sit up in the fir-wood now, but I must go and have a parting look at my favourite place before I go."

"So you're rightly sure about going, ma'am, then? Well, we shall be terribly lonely when you and Miss Alice have left."

"Yes, we must go, Mr. Deverel. Sometimes I fear we are giving your mother

too much trouble. She is an old lady now. I think you yourself must often have been put about on account of our being here, and have wished us anywhere else."

Simon looked at her steadily for some seconds. Evidently there was something in his heart he wanted to say, but he did not say it. His eyes fell when they met Mrs. Sutcliffe's, and he added:

"We shall be very sorry to lose you, ma'am, very sorry indeed."

"But don't you suppose we shall be sorry to go? Oh, Mr. Deverel," she said, holding out her hand to him, "how can I ever thank you for all you have done! I believe Alice would rather stay here than go with me."

Simon clasped her hand, and as she withdrew it, Mrs. Sutcliffe saw there was a tear in the corner of his eye.

From that day forth she marked in his demeanour a natural courtesy and dignity she had never before noticed. Rough farmer as he was, there was nothing of the boor in him. Country bred herself, Mrs. Sutcliffe saw nothing odd in his rustic speech and manner, and, even if she had, her heart was generous enough to have reckoned it as nothing against his sterling goodness.

In due time Mrs. Sutcliffe left the farm, and Simon went to his work more silent and more resolute than heretofore. He bore in patience all his mother's gibes, for the old woman believed, and she was not far wrong, that very little of that fifty pounds remained in Simon's keeping. The farmer never saw the doctor without enquiring for his late guest, and for some time the report was as good as could be wished. But one day in spring the doctor had bad news to tell. Mrs. Sutcliffe had quite broken down under the work, and had left the home some weeks. He had only just heard by accident that she was living, he feared, in some poverty in London.

A strange light broke over Simon's face as he listened to the doctor's story.

"Will you give me the address, if you please, doctor?" he said gently; "I've a bit of money she bade me keep for her, and just now it may come in handy."

"Simon, Simon, that is a lie, and—bless you, my dear fellow, for telling it, and I'll be as good a liar as you. I had some of the money, too, and I've just sent her some of it," said the doctor.

Simon clasped the doctor's hand.

"Doctor, I must tell you something.

I a'n't a man o' many words. The first time I knew she was in trouble I began to love her; and I ha' been wantin' to make her my wife ever since I ha' knowd her rascal of a husband was dead."

"Then why the deuce did you let her go away? Why didn't you ask her?"

"I feared like; though she was only a country gell bred and born, she seemed so soft and gentle when compared wi' the likes o' me; but now she's down in the world she might listen, just for the home, you know."

"For a home, indeed; and why not for yourself? Why, the last words she said to me were that you were the best man she had ever known."

"Ah yes, she liked me, and the little gell liked me too, but whether she'd like to live all her life at Cobb Hall is quite another matter. Though she is a farmer's daughter herself, you know, doctor."

"And she'll be a farmer's wife before many weeks are over, I expect. Go to her at once, man, and tell her if she won't have you for a husband I'll marry her myself."

"Well, p'raps I'd better go home and think about it. You'll give me the address, doctor?"

The address was given, and the next day Simon saw the doctor, and told him he had made up his mind to start on his momentous journey the day after to-morrow; and surely enough, at seven in the morning, Simon, dressed in his best, walked up to the White Horse to go by the carrier's-cart to Martlebury, and there take the train; but early as he was, the doctor was there before him.

As soon as the latter saw Simon coming along he went to meet him, and, taking him by the arm, led him aside. Simon had never been to London but once before, and the prospect of the journey, leaving the errand altogether out of the question, would have been enough to make him nervous.

"I'm glad you're here, doctor; there's a sight o' things I want to ax ye."

"Simon, my friend, you'd better not go to London to-day," said the doctor, his eye and his voice both tender and full of compassion.

"Why?" said Simon, stopping short. "She not ill, doctor? Nothing o' that?"

"No illness, only ill-luck. Heaven forgive me for saying so. Simon, her husband is not dead. He arrived in England a week ago."

"Oh, that is it, is it?" said Simon, not raising his eyes, and without another word he turned on his heel and walked back to the farm.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III. CHAPTER VI.

WEARIED after a night of unrest, followed by a sultry exhausting day, Hester Devenant, lulled by the cool of evening and the drowsy dusk of the gloaming, had fallen into a deep sleep—for a while into a restful one. But dreams came at last—phantoms as stirring as though they had been realities.

Once more in her fevered fancy she knelt among the king-cups by the big dyke; once more a dead, white face rose from oozy depths; once more the water parted to let that ghastly thing pass out into the fitful gleaming of the night.

How real—how real it all was to that troubled sleeper! Her mental vision, watching each detail of the grim drama, as the ear might follow each note of a melody known by heart, seemed to catch the glistening shimmer of the drops that fell from the dead man's hair, and to note the circles widening and expanding on the ruffled surface of the dyke to die in little sobs among the sedges.

As the living horror of her dream grew, deep sighs trembled through her parted lips, her face twitched, her hands worked, and so at last the depth and passion of her anguish woke her. Drawing her breath heavily, and pushing back from her brow the thick grey locks that were dank and heavy with sweat, she sat staring at vacancy.

She was conscious of a strange stifling sensation and a great longing for air—more air—some sweet fresh wind from heaven to blow aside these clinging memories and horrible visions of sleep.

Hastily putting aside the covering that Hilda's loving hands had laid across her feet, Hester rose, swayed a moment as she stood, and then passed out into the balmy night.

Once out in the soft silver shower of the moonlight, she stood a moment listening to the murmur of the river, to the gentle rustle of the welcome breeze that went creeping in and out among the branches, and then another sound caught

her ear—the murmur of voices soft and low as those of Jessica and her Lorenzo, in that night when the fair moon made all things bright as were their own full hearts.

Hester crossed to the widely-opened casement. Her dress rustled, bending the grasses as she passed; but lovers' ears are sometimes deaf to all save lovers' sighs. And so it came about that the shadow that fell upon their clasped hands was the first intimation to Ralph and Hilda that their solitude was invaded.

Then came that joyous cry from Hilda, as with outstretched hands she prayed to her mother to come and bless her happy child—a cry that seemed to startle the quiet of the night; a new note of rapture among its gentle harmonies—a cry that met with no response, a note that awoke no answering echo!

Hester was silent, her sombre eyes growing to the face of him who was the living likeness of one who had passed away to the silent land, carrying with him the burden of his sorrows and his sins.

She hardly seemed to see or to hear Hilda; but, noting the look of assured content in Ralph's eyes, she smiled—a smile cruel enough to blight the fairest lover's hope, or at all events, to have the will to do so.

With eager, happy haste Hilda sought her mother's side, caught her hand, and held it close as she led her in from among the wavering leaf-shadows.

She was so stirred and shaken out of her usual self by this new-found joy of hers, so full of fondest utterances of love and care for her mother, that Ralph could do little else save look and listen, biding his time to act as his own counsel and plead his own cause.

His keener, calmer sight saw what was as yet hidden from Hilda's dazzled eyes. Dire and sinister misgivings filled his mind, fears unspeakable arrayed themselves before him, all pointing to possible trouble coming to that dear heart which had but now throbbed against his own.

But let what hot, impatient thoughts there might toss in his heart, Ralph had no choice save silence for a while, since Mrs. Devenant, ignoring Hilda's tender agitation and his own restrained excitement, summoned the servant, ordered the lamp to be brought in, and would have had the moonlight shut out but for Hilda's entreaty.

Ralph was ready to denounce Hester as

selfish and cruel. In reality she was only gaining time. The influence of that dream—so terribly real in its unreality—was about her still; her nerves were vibrating; there was the sound as of the sobbing ripples of disturbed waters in her ears.

She wanted to be calm and self-possessed before entering upon a terrible conflict. She wanted time. But now that interval of respite was passed. The lamp, with its widespread rosy-tinted shade, made a ruddy moonlight of its own, rivalling the paler one outside; the maid-servant had returned to the interrupted delights of a rustic flirtation.

Restraint could be kept up no longer; Hilda was kneeling by her mother's knee, Ralph, pleading his dear love's cause and his own, displayed no lack of eloquence. He craved the place of a son in the heart of Hilda's mother. Whereas, hitherto, she, Hester, had known the devotion of one heart—now should she be able to gauge that of two. Could she trust him with her dearest treasure? Did she question the height, and depth, and strength of his love for the woman he coveted for his wife, the dear companion of his life, the sharer of his aims and hopes, the secret inspirer of all that should be best and brightest in the golden years to come? Let her put him and his love to the test, let her think of something hard to do, and bid him do it for Hilda's sake; then she would see if he were worthy of the great and beautiful gift he begged of her.

Hester raised her eyes to his loving earnest face, the face of the man who looked at her with the eyes of Geoffrey Stirling, who spoke to her with the voice of Geoffrey Stirling.

"Would you, indeed, do so much for Hilda's sake?" she said.

"Try me," he answered, tossing back his hair with the old familiar gesture, looking her and the world proudly in the face, conscious of the wealth of love in his beating heart—the love that could never swerve, or fail, or change.

Putting Hilda gently but firmly from her, Hester rose from her chair, stood confronting the man who had asked for a son's place in her heart, and would have spoken, but that for the moment something impeded her utterance.

She had been foiled once by grim Death himself. She had thirsted for vengeance through the long and arid years, and when

the longed-for cup had but touched her lips, a skeleton hand had grasped it, dashed it to the ground, and cast it in fragments at her feet. Now, once more her eager, trembling lips almost touched its brim, now no bony clutch should wrest it from her. She would drink and be satisfied. She would see the travail of a human soul and be content.

It was not pity that held Hester tongue-tied. Perhaps in all her life she had hardly known what pity was. True she had pitied Gabriel, her husband, as he lay heavy with the heaviness of death upon her breast, staring heavenwards with sightless eyes; but the pity had been more for herself than him even then—in that she suffered so acutely in the loss of what she had loved. It was not pity that held her silent, but rather an exultation so passionate that it climbed in her throat like poor Lear's sorrow, choking her.

Wax-white was her cheek, pallid her lips; but in her eyes burnt a hot and sombre fire, and the hand that rested on the mantel-shelf was clenched.

"Try me," said Ralph again, half-laughing as he spoke, exultant in his knowledge of his own heart, and of Hilda's.

"Well, then, for Hilda's sake, give up all these hopes of yours, Ralph Stirling; trample them under foot. Kiss her if you will; I will grant you so much grace; and then see her face no more."

At this, Hilda, who had, still kneeling, been looking up at her mother as one who listens for a longed-for word of greeting, sprang to her feet and to her lover's side, clasping her hands about his arm, gazing wildly in his face as who would say, "Do not heed her, she knows not what she says!"

For the darkest shadow of all was over Hilda now. The terrible dread which had many a time and oft come upon her in the dead, dark hours of the night, was staring in her face, a gruesome, fearsome thing that chilled her blood, and stayed the beating of her heart. Ralph cast his arm about her, drawing her closely to his breast. He looked down upon her upturned face, fondly, proudly, with an exquisite smile of absolute trust and devotion.

Then, still smiling, he looked at Hester.

"Why should I give up Hilda?" he said.

The hand upon the mantel-shelf was clenched till it shook with the tension. Hester's lips trembled so that they scarce

could frame the words that strove to pass their trembling portal.

"Because it is not for you, Geoffrey Stirling's son, to ask any honest woman to be your wife—least of all Gabriel Devenant's daughter."

Ralph fell back a pace before her words as if they had been blows, staring at the fierce and pitiless beauty of her face with wide and wondering eyes.

Was she mad—this woman who dared to utter his father's name coupled with some shadowy accusation of dishonour—this woman who bade him give up all his best and highest hopes because no honest woman might link her lot with his?

Hilda, still clinging to him with loving, restraining arms, moaned out a prayer to him to have some pity, to be gentle—very gentle—with poor mothie.

But Ralph was past gentleness or pity either. In his ears no name was so sacred as that of the father whom he had loved—the father who had died, mourning him as one dead—died, hungering for the touch of his hand and the sound of his voice.

"If this is some sorry jest, some jugglery to test my love for Hilda, I pray you say no more. There are wounds so deep they cannot bear even the lightest touch."

Thus spoke Ralph, his breath coming in the quick gasps of strong and sudden excitement, his cheek pallid as Hester's own.

"It is no sorry jest, no jugglery," she answered, and her voice rang high and clear. "You are the son of a robber, a liar, a cheat, a murderer!"

With a strangled cry of bitter rage and pain, Ralph fell back from Hester Devenant as though she were some pestilential thing, whom all men alike must hate and fly from.

"My God!" he said, sobbing with passion as he spoke, "that I should live to hear such words, and let those live who utter them!"

"Ralph, Ralph, have pity! Oh, my love, she knows not what she says. These are but wild delusions haunting her tortured brain. She knows not what she says."

Thus Hilda, beside herself, pleading for pity, betrayed the secret terror of her life.

But none heeded.

She had slipped from Ralph's hold, and stood beside her mother, white and wan, yet full of courage.

"Come," she said, "mothie, come and

rest. Say no more now. Nothing shall be let to vex you, dear. Come!"

Hester laughed aloud.

"Poor fool!" she said, clutching the girl's wrist and putting her roughly aside; "she would rather think her mother mad than believe her lover the wretched thing he is. Listen," she continued, pointing at Ralph, who, regarding her fixedly, fought bravely for self-command; "listen to more words of truth, and wonder more and more that you live to hearken to them, or let me live who speak them. Do what you will; only listen, and I care not what you do. Your father, Geoffrey Stirling, robbed the bank. He was the hero of that oft-told tale. He drove Gabriel Devenant to a shameful death, made me a widow and my child fatherless. I cursed him living and I cursed him dead, and now the curse is on your head, the blight is on your heart. He died, confessing his guilt, crying aloud for mercy, praying for time—time—only time, and he would strive to repair the past. He cried out that the tears of the widow and the orphan were searing his heart, that ill-gotten gold was dragging him down to hell. I tell you he confessed—confessed—but only what I had known through all the long and weary years."

A strange change had come over Ralph. He looked, moved, and spoke as one actuated by some power outside himself.

"If you believed these things, if you believed my dearest father to be a robber and a murderer, in that his sin drove your husband to his death, how is it that you ever touched my hand, or let my foot cross your threshold? How could you bear to see me by your daughter's side, to greet me as you have done, almost tenderly?"

Hester came close up to her antagonist; she smiled in his face.

"I was foiled once. Death came, and, in the game I played, I lost. Now, I have won! We are told that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children; and now, you must suffer for your father's sin, and I shall see you suffer."

"Who is the liar—who is the Judas now?" said Ralph, speaking as one who has little choice of the words he utters; "you have

lived a lie to me, with all these bitter thoughts seething in your heart. You have lured me on, you have betrayed me with kindness, you have been a Judas to me."

"Who told you to say that to me?" said Hester, fiercely, nervously, clutching at her sleeve; "you have been comparing notes, you and——"

Ralph interrupted her.

"I have been comparing notes with no one. I speak of these fancies of yours about my father, as if they were facts, to humour you. To you they have been facts, and you have been false to me."

"You do not believe what I say?"

Hester hissed the words through her teeth.

Ralph laughed softly.

"Words to be believed must be proved," he said, "else they are but empty things."

As he spoke, such a change had come over the face of the woman he confronted as startled even him, wrapped as he was in that unnatural calm that is often the outcome of a terrible strain.

She stared fixedly at something beyond him; her jaw dropped; she staggered back against the mantel-shelf. The door behind Ralph had opened softly, but he had not heard it, possessed as he was by a supreme excitement of nerve and feeling that rendered him blind and deaf to all else. At sight of Hester's changing face he turned. Then, hand to hand, eye to eye, two, long parted, faced each other.

"Master Ralph—Master Ralph!"

"Davey—dear old Davey!"

And Hilda with a glad cry flung herself upon Davey's neck.

He was no longer to her a man who had loved, and loved in vain. He was help when help was most sorely needed; he was the good angel whose advent was as that of one sent straight from Heaven.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LIV. RUMMELSBURG.

MR. SCARBOROUGH had again sent for Mr. Gray, but a couple of weeks passed before he came. At first he refused to come, saying that he would send his clerk down if any work were wanted such as the clerk might do. And the clerk did come and was very useful. But Mr. Scarborough persevered, using arguments which Mr. Gray found himself unable at last to resist. He was dying, and there would soon be an end of it. That was his strongest argument. Then it was alleged that a lawyer of experience was certainly needed, and that Mr. Scarborough could not very well put his affairs into the hands of a stranger. And old friendship was brought up. And then, at last, the squire alleged that there were other secrets to be divulged respecting his family, of which Mr. Scarborough thought that Mr. Gray would approve. What could be the "other secrets"? But it ended in Mr. Gray assenting to go, in opposition to his daughter's advice. "I would have nothing more to do with him or his secrets," Dolly had said.

"You do not know him."

"I know as much about him as a woman can know of a man she doesn't know;—and all from yourself. You have said over and over again that he is a 'rascal.'"

"Not a rascal. I don't think I said he was a rascal."

"I believe you used that very word."

"Then I unsay it. A rascal has something mean about him. Juniper's a rascal."

"He cares nothing for his word."

"Nothing at all,—when the law is concerned."

"And he has defamed his own wife."

"That was done many years ago."

"For a fixed purpose, and not from passion," Dolly continued. "He is a thoroughly bad man. You have made his will for him, and now I would leave him." After that Mr. Gray declined for a second time to go. But at last he was persuaded.

On the evening of his arrival he dined with Mountjoy and Merton, and on that occasion Miss Scarborough joined them. Of course there was much surmise as to the cause for this further visit. Merton declared that, as he had acted as the sick man's private secretary, he was bound to keep his secret as far as he knew it. He only surmised what he believed to be the truth, but of that he could say nothing. Miss Scarborough was altogether in the dark. She, and she alone, spoke of her brother with respect, but in that she knew nothing.

"I cannot tell what it is," said Mountjoy; "but I suspect it to be something intended for my benefit and for the utter ruin of Augustus." Miss Scarborough had now retired. "If it could be possible, I should think that he intended to declare that all he had said before was false." To this, however, Mr. Gray would not listen. He was very stout in denying the possibility of any reversion of the decision to which they had all come. Augustus was undoubtedly by law his father's eldest son. He had seen with his own eyes copies of the registry of the marriage, which Mr. Barry had gone across the Continent to make. And in that book his wife had signed her maiden name according to the custom of the country. This had been done in the presence of the clergyman and of a gentleman,—a German, then residing on the spot, who had himself been examined, and had stated that the wedding, as a wedding,

had been regular in all respects. He was since dead, but the clergyman who had married them was still alive. Within twelve months of that time Mr. Scarborough and his bride had arrived in England, and Augustus had been born. "Nothing but the most indisputable evidence would have sufficed to prove a fact by which you were so cruelly wronged," he said, addressing himself to Mountjoy. "And when your father told me that no wrong could be done to you, as the property was hopelessly in the hands of the Jews, I told him that for all purposes of the law, the Jews were as dear to me as you were. I do say that nothing but the most certain facts would have convinced me. Such facts, when made certain, are immovable. If your father has any plot for robbing Augustus, he will find me as staunch a friend to Augustus as ever I have been to you." When he had so spoken they separated for the night, and his words had been so strong that they had altogether affected Mountjoy. If such were his father's intention, it must be by some further plot that he endeavoured to carry it out; and in his father's plots he would put no trust whatever.

And yet he declared his own purpose as he discussed the matter late into the night with Merton. "I cannot trust Grey at all, nor my father either, because I do not believe, as Grey believes, this story of the marriage. My father is so clever, and so resolute in his purpose to set aside all control over the property as arranged by law, that to my mind it has all been contrived by himself. Either Mr. Barry has been squared, or the German parson, or the foreign gentleman, or more probably all of them. Mr. Grey himself may have been squared for all I know;—though he is the kindest-hearted gentleman I ever came across. Anything shall be more probable to me than that I am not my father's eldest son." To all this Mr. Merton said very little, though no doubt he had his own ideas.

The next morning the three gentlemen, with Mr. Grey's clerk, sat down to breakfast solemn and silent. The clerk had been especially entreated to say nothing of what he had learned, and was therefore not questioned by his master. But in truth he had learned but little, having spent his time in the sorting and copying of letters which, though they all bore upon the subject in hand, told nothing of the real tale. Further surmises were useless now,

as, at eleven o'clock, Mr. Grey and Mr. Merton were to go up together to the squire's room. The clerk was to remain within call, but there would be no need of Mountjoy. "I suppose I may as well go to bed," said he, "or up to London, or anywhere." Mr. Grey very sententially advised him at any rate not to go up to London.

The hour came, and Mr. Grey, with Merton and the clerk, disappeared upstairs. They were summoned by Miss Scarborough, who seemed to feel heavily the awful solemnity of the occasion. "I am sure he is going to do something very dreadful this time," she whispered to Mr. Grey, who seemed himself to be a little awestruck, and did not answer her.

At two o'clock they all met again at lunch, and Mr. Grey was silent, and in truth very unhappy. Merton and the clerk were also silent,—as was Miss Scarborough, silent as death. She indeed knew nothing, but the other three knew as much as Mr. Scarborough could or would tell them. Mountjoy was there also, and in the middle of the meal broke out violently: "Why the mischief don't you tell me what it is that my father has said to you?"

"Because I do not believe a word of his story," said Mr. Grey.

"Oh, Mr. Grey!" ejaculated Miss Scarborough.

"I do not believe a word of his story," repeated Mr. Grey. "Your father's intelligence is so high, and his principles so low, that there is no scheme which he does not think that he cannot carry out against the established laws of his country. His present tale is a made-up fable."

"What do you say, Merton?" asked Mountjoy.

"It looks to me to be true," said Merton, "but I am no lawyer."

"Why don't you tell me what it is?" said Mountjoy.

"I cannot tell you," said Grey, "though he commissioned me to do so. Greenwood there will tell you." Greenwood was the name of the clerk. "But I advise you to take him with you to your own room. And Mr. Merton would, I am sure, go with you. As for me, it would be impossible that I should do credit in the telling of it to a story of which I do not believe a single word."

"Am I not to know?" asked Miss Scarborough plaintively.

"Your nephew will tell you," said Mr.

Grey, "or Mr. Merton ;—or Mr. Greenwood can do so if he has permission from Mr. Scarborough. I would rather tell no one. It is to me incredible." With that he got up and walked away.

"Now then, Merton," said Mountjoy, rising from his chair.

"Upon my word I hardly know what to do," said Merton.

"You must come and tell me this wonderful tale. I suppose that in some way it does affect my interests ?"

"It affects your interests very much."

"Then I think I may say that I certainly shall believe it. My father at present would not wish to do me an injury. It must be told, so come along. Mr. Greenwood had better come also." Then he left the room, and the two men followed him. They went away to the smoking-room, leaving Mr. Grey with Miss Scarborough. "Am I to know nothing about it ?" said Miss Scarborough.

"Not from me, Miss Scarborough. You can understand that I cannot tell you a story which will require at every word that I should explain my thorough disbelief in your brother. I have been very angry with him and he has been more energetic than can have been good for him."

"Oh me ; you will have killed him among you !"

"It has been his own doing. You, however, had better go to him. I must return to town this evening."

"You will stay for dinner ?"

"No. I cannot stay for dinner. I cannot sit down with Mountjoy,—who has done nothing in the least wrong,—because I feel myself to be altogether opposed to his interests. I would rather be out of the house." So saying he did leave the house, and went back to London by train that afternoon.

The meeting that morning, which had been very stormy, cannot be given word by word. From the moment in which the squire had declared his purpose, the lawyer had expressed his disbelief in all that was said to him. This Mr. Scarborough had at first taken very kindly, but Mr. Grey clung to his purpose with a pertinacity which had at last beaten down the squire's ill-humour, and had called for the interference of Mr. Merton. "How can I be quiet ?" the squire had said, "when he tells me that everything I say is a lie ?"

"It is a lie," said Mr. Grey, who had lost all control of himself.

"You should not say that, Mr. Grey," said Merton.

"He should spare a man on his death-bed, who is endeavouring to do his duty by his children," said the man who thus declared himself to be dying.

"I will go away," said Mr. Grey, rising. "He has forced me to come here against my will, and has known,—must have known,—that I should tell him what I thought. Even though a man be dying, a man cannot accept what he says on a matter of business such as this unless he believe him. I must tell him that I believe him or that I do not. I disbelieve the whole story, and will not act upon it as though I believed it." But even after this the meeting was continued, Mr. Grey consenting to sit there and to hear what was said to the end.

The purport of Mr. Scarborough's story will probably have been understood by our readers. It was Mr. Scarborough's present intention to make it understood that the scheme intended for the disinheritation of Mountjoy had been false from the beginning to the end, and had been arranged, not for the injury of Mountjoy, but for the salvation of the estate from the hands of the Jews. Mountjoy would have lost nothing, as the property would have gone entirely to the Jews had Mr. Scarborough then died, and Mountjoy been taken as his legitimate heir. He was not anxious, he had declared, to say anything on the present occasion in defence of his conduct in that respect. He would soon be gone, and he would leave men to judge him who might do so the more honestly when they should have found that he had succeeded in paying even the Jews in full the moneys which they had actually advanced. But now things were again changed, and he was bound to go back to the correct order of things.

"No !" shouted Mr. Grey.

"To the correct order of things," he went on. Mountjoy Scarborough was, he declared, undoubtedly legitimate. And then he made Merton and the clerk bring forth all the papers,—as though he had never brought forth any papers to prove the other statement to Mr. Grey. And he did expect Mr. Grey to believe them. Mr. Grey simply put them all back, metaphorically, with his hand. There had been two marriages, absolutely prepared with the intent of enabling him at some future time to upset the law altogether, if it should seem good to him to do so.

"And your wife!" shouted Mr. Grey.

"Dear woman! She would have done anything that I told her;—unless I had told her to do what was absolutely wrong."

"Not wrong!"

"Well;—you know what I mean. She was the purest and the best of women." Then he went on with his tale. There had been two marriages, and he now brought forth all the evidence of the former marriage. It had taken place in a remote town, a village, in the northern part of Prussia, whither she had been taken by her mother to join him. The two ladies had both been since long dead. He had been laid up at the little Prussian town under the plea of a bad leg. He did not scruple to say now that the bad leg had been pretence, and a portion of his scheme. The law, he thought, in endeavouring to make arrangements for his property,—the property which should have been his own,—had sinned so greatly as to drive a wise man to much scheming. He had begun scheming early in the business. But for his bad leg the old lady would not have brought her daughter to be married at so out-of-the-way a place as Rummelsburg in Pomerania. He had travelled about and found Rummelsburg peculiarly fitted for his enterprise. There was a most civil old Lutheran clergyman there, to whom he had made himself peculiarly acceptable. He had now certified copies of the registry at Rummelsburg, which left no loop-hole for doubt. But he had felt that probably no enquiry would have been made about what had been done thirty years ago at Rummelsburg, had he himself desired to be silent on the subject. "There will be no difficulty," he said, "in making the Rummelsburg marriage known to all the world."

"I think there will,—very great difficulty," Mr. Grey had said.

"Not the least. But when I had to be married in the light of day, after Mountjoy's birth, at Nice in Italy, then there was the difficulty. It had to be done in the light of day; and that little traveller with his nurse were with us. Nice was in Italy then, and some contrivance was, I assure you, necessary. But it was done, and I have always had with me the double sets of certificates. As things have turned up, I have had to keep Mr. Grey altogether in the dark as regards Rummelsburg. It was very difficult; but I have succeeded."

That Mr. Grey should have been almost driven to madness by such an outrage as this was a matter of course. But he preferred to believe that Rummelsburg and not Nice was the myth. "How did your wife travel with you during the whole of that year?" he had asked.

"As Mrs. Scarborough, no doubt. But we had been very little in society, and the world at large seemed willing to believe almost anything of me that was wrong. However, there's the Rummelsburg marriage, and if you send to Rummelsburg you'll find that it's all right;—a little white church up a corner, with a crooked spire. The old clergyman is, no doubt, dead, but I should imagine that they would keep their registers." Then he explained how he had travelled about the world with the two sets of certificates, and had made the second public when his object had been to convert Augustus into his eldest son. Many people then had been found who had remembered something of the marriage at Nice, and remembered to have remembered something at the time of having been in possession of some secret as to the lady. But Rummelsburg had been kept quite in the dark. Now it was necessary that a strong light should be thrown on the absolute legality of the Rummelsburg marriage.

He declared that he had more than once made up his mind to destroy those Rummelsburg documents, but had always been deterred by the reflection that when they were once gone, they could not be brought back again. "I had always intended," he had said, "to burn the papers the last thing before my death. But as I learned Augustus's character, I made quite certain by causing them to be sealed up in a parcel addressed to him, so that, if I had died by accident, they might have fallen into proper hands. But I see now the wickedness of my project, and, therefore, I give them over to Mr. Grey." So saying he tendered the parcel to the attorney.

Mr. Grey, of course, refused to take, or even to touch the Rummelsburg parcel. He then prepared to leave the room, declaring it would be his duty to act on the part of Augustus, should Augustus be pleased to accept his services. But Mr. Scarborough, almost with tears, implored him to change his purpose. "Why should you set two brothers by the ears?" At this Mr. Grey only shook his head incredulously. "And why ruin the property without an object?"

"The property will come to ruin."

"Not if you will take the matter up in the proper spirit. But if you determine to drive one brother to hostility against the other, and promote unnecessary litigation, of course the lawyers will get it all." Then Mr. Grey left the room, boiling with anger, in that he, with his legal knowledge and determination to do right, had been so utterly thrown aside, while Mr. Scarborough sank exhausted by the efforts he had gone through.

TRADES'-GUILDS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

I MUST commence this article by a declaration that

The moving accident is not my trade ;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts ;
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts,

but I can pipe my simple song, and even find my solitude, as well in the town as in the country. The architecture and the antiquities of great cities have scanty charms for me. What I chiefly love to contemplate is the full tide of human life as it flows through the streets, the alleys, and the markets. The "busy hum of men" pleases me far more than the "towered cities" in which they dwell, and I heartily enter into the feelings of Dr. Johnson, who thought that Fleet Street and Charing Cross contained the finest views in the world. If it had fallen to my lot to "personally conduct" Dr. Johnson through Constantinople, I should not have taken him to St. Sophia, or Dolmabaghtche, or Tcheraghan, nor should I have trailed him up and down the Bosphorus, which, lovely as it is, would have had no charms for him. If he had had a fancy to visit the conventional lions of the place, I should certainly have left him to the professional dragoman, who is the modern embodiment of Sindbad's "Old Man of the Sea." "If," says poor Sindbad, "I loitered or went leisurely, he beat me, and I was a captive unto him." In these few words we have a lively picture of the dragoman, who will never suffer the tourist to loiter or go leisurely. It is true that the modern dragoman seldom, if ever, beats the tourist, for he has been affected by that general amelioration of Turkish manners which, ever since the massacre of the Janissaries, has extended itself even to the dogs of the capital. Still, even the modi-

fied and tempered dragoman fully justifies those old Levantines who included him in their daily prayer thus : "Save me, oh, Lord, from fire, the plague, and the dragoman !"

For such a survey of Constantinople as I should have proposed to the Sage of Fleet Street, a longer period is required than the statutory fortnight, within the limits of which the conventional tourist compresses his inspection, before he goes home to write his book on the Turkish Empire, or to harangue his constituents on the Eastern Question. I have resided here for nearly seven years, and I know that I have yet much to learn. But long before I came here I had made myself familiar with the features of old London, and I had not been here long before all my recollections of what I had read or seen were revived by my experiences of Constantinople. What struck me first was that the localisation of trades, which prevailed in London down to a very late period, lingered in Constantinople still. In fact, though it is slightly modified since I came here, it lingers to this day.

I walked only the other day through three long streets in Stamboul which are entirely given up to the workers and dealers in gold and silver, and which reminded me of the days when the whole of Lombard Street and a great part of Chepe were given up to the shops of the goldsmiths and silversmiths. In the neighbourhood of the Mosque of Sultan Bayezid is a quarter which is a faint reflection of Pater-noster Row, and which is said by a modern traveller, but upon what authority I know not, to have preserved its present characteristics from the palmy days of the Greek empire. The pipe-makers ; the makers of mouthpieces (for the man who makes the pipe does not make the mouthpiece) ; the saddlers ; the packers ; the trunk-makers ; the craftsmen who stuff the "yorghans," which serve both as mattresses and quilts, with cotton ; and the vendors of the great fur-lined cloaks with pointed hoods, one of which is almost an entire wardrobe, have each their separate quarter. I walked through these quarters the other day, and also through more than a mile of braziers' shops, in which I was deafened by the operations of those who were fabricating mangals, coffee-pots, urns, enormous round dishes, and platters of every form. The tent-makers are all to be found in the quarter called the "Bit Bazaar." The makers and vendors of sabres have a

street to themselves; you might, as the saying is, "throw a table-cloth" over the makers of turbans; and the makers of embroidered slippers are as exclusive as if they were members of the Stock Exchange. We have a street of bean-sellers, and a street of cake-makers, and of course each of the principal articles of consumption has its separate market, of which I will say more hereafter. If I could have led Dr. Johnson through such streets, straight-way Budge Row and Candlewright (Cannon) Street, Fish Street and Fish Street Hill, the Vintry, Paternoster Row and Amen Corner, and many other such scenes familiar to him, would have risen up again before him, and he would have felt that he was in London once more. In closing my remarks on the localisation of trades, I must add that there is a street in Galata called Maltese Street, which is exclusively occupied by Maltese dealers in fresh pork, ham, bacon, sausages, and dried fish of all kinds, butter and cheese, and potatoes, and also in all the articles usually found in Italian warehouses. The competition in this street is so great that the articles sold in it can be obtained more cheaply than from any of the isolated dealers in like goods. I do not suppose that those who first planned the localisation of trades had this object in view, but it is certain that a like result must have followed, and does follow, wherever such localisation prevails, and I think it is clear that those who have been at pains to break up this localisation in great cities, and to scatter the trades over many quarters, must have benefited dealers at the expense of the general public. However, it seems to be a received maxim in these days that the public is made for the dealers, and not the dealers for the public.

At the commencement of the present century one of the most intelligent and well-informed of the Europeans who have visited Constantinople wrote that each nationality affected particular trades—that the Turks took chiefly to the manufacture of arms, carpets, and pipes; that the Armenians were, generally, apothecaries, furriers, and stewards in the pahas' houses, that the Greeks were for the most part money-changers and dealers in jewellery and trinkets, and that the Jews were what they were everywhere else—viz., "Jacks of all trades." This division of labour in no way interfered with the localisation of trades, and, in this respect, Constantinople was more liberal than old

London, in which a strange or a Jewish tradesman or artisan never found favour. To some slight extent the division still prevails, but a great fusion has taken place, and it would be wrong to say that at the present day the members of any nationality, taking them as a body, specially affect particular occupations. Still, the point should not be forgotten by the student of the history of social life in Constantinople.

Stamboul presents, as London has presented, and still presents, curious illustrations of the marvellous vitality of the names of streets and buildings. Thus there is a Yeni Capou (Newgate) in the walls of Constantinople which has been called Newgate in Greek from the days of Theodosius down to the Conquest, and which is called Newgate in Turkish to this day. So also there is a Yeni Djami, or New Mosque, which has been called a new mosque for three hundred years. The names of Newgate Street and Newgate in London boast a respectable antiquity, but they cannot compete with the Newgate of Constantinople.

But it is not alone in the localisation of trades that Constantinople resembles old London. There are many other points of resemblance, although under modern European pressure they are beginning to pass away. In fact, Constantinople must be regarded as a city which has fallen into a deep sleep on the roadway of civilisation while her European sisters have moved on. She is beginning to rub her eyes, and to stretch her limbs, and to make good resolutions, which for the most part end in the formation of commissions, whereof come pipes and coffee and reports. Still, like the sluggard, she is at least conscious that she ought to be awake, and though she turns her "heavy head" somewhat slothfully, she turns it so as to give signs of a returning animation. Every year more and more shops, with glazed fronts and fitted after the modern fashion of Europe, make their appearance; every year, if a street be reconstructed after a conflagration, it is made wider than its predecessor; every year a struggle is made to provide a more abundant and less fitful supply of gas; and every year witnesses an attempt, though not a very vigorous attempt, to make the pavements somewhat less painful to the feet of true believers.

Still, many of the old characteristics remain; there are still many hundreds of shops with open fronts, which are no more screened from observation than were the

booths in the Flete Street and Chepe of our forefathers. In these shops all the business of the occupants is carried on in full view of the passers-by and of the loungers. Thus the Turkish grocer, conspicuous by his snow-white turban and his flowing beard, sits cross-legged on the high-raised floor of his shop, with a by no means distant background of canisters and bottles; with his scales suspended from the roof, and with all the materials of his trade close and ready to his hand. Usually, a female friend, or purchaser, is also seated on the shop-board, but with her legs dependent in the street. Of course she wears a yashmak and feridjee, but a yashmak is no bar to oral conversation, and still less is it a bar to the language of the eyes, and conversation, of the one kind or the other, goes on for an indefinite time between the grocer and his visitor. When a veritable customer arrives, the old Turk does not trouble himself to remove the chibouque from his lips, but stretches out his hand to the required canister or bottle, draws down the scales from the roof, and supplies the article demanded. Sitting, as he does, a little above the faces of his customers, he looks down gravely and benevolently upon them, and seems to say: "Look around, there are no dark corners in my shop; no sand can lurk undetected in the sugar which I present to you in the light of this blazing sun; nor could the insidious horse-bean, if I were to introduce it among the fragrant berries of Mocha, escape your penetrating gaze." The restaurateur's cook, as he stands behind his smoking pots and shining stew-pans, in like manner takes the entire crowd of spectators into his confidence, and defies them to mistake a rabbit, which he dissects before them, for a cat or a puppy. All the tradesmen and handicraftsmen seem to say to the intending purchasers: "Behold us! We are all fair and above board. You will find in us no untradesman-like artifices. We lay bare to you all the arts and mysteries of our crafts. Would you buy a yorghani (wadded quilt) you shall see us weigh out the cotton which it shall contain, and you may watch us as we make it up, and judge for yourselves whether we are the men to connive at a surreptitious insertion of inferior material."

No one who knows Constantinople will be surprised to learn that a brisk trade is done in the readjustment of the "fez," for the greater part of the male population is befezzed, and it is essential to the well-being of every wearer of a fez, that his

head-dress shall preserve its pristine stiffness, since, although when the fez is stiff it resembles nothing so much as a bright scarlet inverted flower-pot, it is not an unbecoming head-dress, but lends itself readily to the features of the wearer, giving an additional shade of sternness to the stern, and sitting with an air of benign content upon the forehead of the benevolent. When, however, it has lost its form and become limp, it looks like an old red night-cap, and invests its wearer with an air of rakish imbecility which is anything but edifying. In this condition it requires to be readjusted, and the manner of its readjustment is in this wise. Within the open shop-front of the fez-restorer is what cooks call a hot-plate, and on the hot-plate, over holes which permit the heat to reach them from the subjacent charcoal, are a number of brass pots in shape like flower pots, and of various sizes. On one of these the limp and bedraggled fez is fitted tightly; then another brass pot is fitted over the fez, and by means of two handles, made to revolve briskly round the lower pot. This having been done, and the upper pot having been removed, the fez is seen to have regained its youthful form and vigour, and to have become capable, once more, in accordance with the temperament of its wearer, of inspiring merriment, affection, or awe. While this is going on the owner of the fez waits proudly in the street, in the full consciousness of virtue and surrounded by a crowd, whose members greet him with sympathetic laughter when he has regained and marched off with his badge of slavery, if he be a Greek or an Armenian, but his badge of distinction if he be an Osmanli. There are few things so much detested by the Christian subjects or servants of the Sultan as is the fez; and, knowing this, the Osmanlis take care to make the wearing of it obligatory.

The boutiques of the coffee-dealers also demand a few words of notice. There is a coffee khan in Stamboul where the coffee is bruised by machinery, but the countless coffee-drinkers of the capital cannot go thither for their coffee, and therefore the coffee-bruisers are scattered through all quarters. Of course the fez-restorers also are not localised. Within the open shop-front of the coffee-bruisers there is a large iron mortar in which the beans are placed, and behind this, and slightly raised above it, stand two brawny Croats, who are armed with heavy iron pestles which are furnished with slender iron handles of over four feet

in length. With swift alternate strokes the Croats soon reduce the beans to fine powder, and, as they do so, a fragrant aroma rises into the air, whilst the vibrations of the iron handles produce a musical ping-ping, ping-ping, which is inexpressibly pleasing to the ear. The whole operation is like a hymn of praise accompanied by a sacrifice of incense.

The Turkish fruit shops are always arranged with an attention to colour that any Parisian fruiterer might envy. Long and thick ropes of the gay-coloured Amasia apples, gleaming like the jewelled fruits which Aladdin saw in the magician's garden, depend from the roofs, or hang in festoons from the walls, whilst on the floor of the shop the glowing oranges, the burnished pomegranates, the shining lemons, and glistening citrons are piled together in luxuriant profusion. Here and there is a cool green couch of lettuces and endives; where nestle in a warm repose the blushing tomato and the ardent capsicum. The grapes are in such profusion that no attempt is made to arrange them; they remain in the great baskets in which they are brought over from the Asiatic shore. The background of the shop is usually built up with a wall of melons.

I love to watch these men, each in his turn; but chiefly I love to linger at the shops of the pastrycooks; to inhale the commingled perfumes of honey and sesame, and to see the rich smoke curl gracefully upwards from the tarts, as the cook draws them out with his long peel from the wide-mouthed oven. It is a sweet thing to watch the making of vermicelli, and to see the cook make bright the copper face of his hot-plate with a cloth of encouraging whiteness, mix the flour in a spotless trough, and pour it from a bright ladle into a shining brass colander, from which it trickles on to the surface of the hot plate in thin streams, which soon become dry and curl up in crisp white threads, which are then gathered up and thrown into polished wooden bowls for sale. Turkish cookery, which is, on the whole, very good, has at least the merit of great variety and of absolute cleanliness. Almost everything that can be cooked, enters into the repertory of the Turkish cook, and it is remarkable that the articles which are cooked on portable stoves in the open streets, are very nearly as good as articles of the same kind which you procure at respectable restaurants.

Every variety of vegetable produce

appears to be an ingredient of the Turkish cuisine. The larger varieties, such as the vegetable-marrow, the aubergine, and especially the courge, which is a ridiculous vegetable like a green sausage of five feet in length, are usually stuffed, but humbler varieties are stewed in some sauce, which may be tomato, but looks like furniture polish. I need not say that chestnuts are treated in this way; but acorns also form an article of consumption. The fruit of the cornel or wild cherry tree, is also in request; it is either eaten raw or in a preserve; in the latter case it is said to be a tonic and a remedy against diarrhoea. The fruit is oval, and somewhat like a sloe, but of a reddish-brown colour; when gathered unripe, which it frequently is, it has a sharp acid taste. It is then pickled in imitation of olives. The Turks also use it in the making of sherbet. The seeds of the pine cones, which are very large, sweet, and oily, are also largely used in pillaffs, in the stuffing of poultry and in sweetmeats. But upon the subject of Turkish cookery I shall have more to say, when I come to write of the outdoor industries.

I shall close my notice of the shops with some remarks upon the barbers' shops, which have a powerful interest for the street boys, because, as the barbers are also dentists, the boys can see solemn old gentlemen having their heads shaved in public, or old gentlemen, by no means so solemn, awaiting the final and fatal tug. This last spectacle has an intense interest for the youthful population, who applaud vigorously when the tooth comes out, but laugh viciously when the operation is unsuccessful.

The barber's basin throughout Constantinople, and, to the best of my knowledge, throughout Turkey, is of the time-honoured pattern, made of brass, and with a semi-circular segment cut out of the rim, so as to admit of the basin being placed close to the customer's neck, and below his chin, while the barber manipulates beard or chin with warm water, until the one or the other is ready for the final operation. It is just such a basin as that which Don Quixote took for "Mambrino's Helmet," and which he placed on his head, upside down, and with the semi-circular hiatus over his forehead, as if the basin had been a morion. It is just such a basin as was wont to be used in Beaumont and Fletcher's amusing burlesque of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, when one of Giant Barbaroso's captives was brought forth upon

the stage, with the basin embracing his neck, close under his chin, as if he were just about to be shaved. Such basins were in universal use in England for some centuries, but, in my time, I have never seen one there. Here there are no other forms. They are not invariably of brass. Of late years basins of pottery have been introduced. I bought, at Mersine, on the Syrian coast, a basin in red and white pottery, which bore the name of a French firm, and I have seen one in the Princes' Islands, in blue and white, which bore the name of an English firm; but whether the basin be of brass, or pewter, or pottery, its form is always the same.

As a matter of course, the barbers' shops in Stamboul are not localised, but there is a little settlement of them close to each principal mosque. One of these settlements consists of a row of small houses, or rather huts, in front of the great mosque of Sultan Achmet, which are occupied by barbers, and are made quite resplendent by the basins, which are hung out in apparently unnecessary profusion in front of the huts.

There is another colony of barbers in the square of the Bayezid Mosque, and they have introduced open-air shaving. Only the other day, in winter, I saw a row of grave Turks seated under the wall of the court of the mosque, and having their tonsure made strictly orthodox. To an unbeliever, the spectacle was provocative of mirth, but to the Moslem crowd it gave great satisfaction. As I have said, the barbers are also dentists, and they have preserved a custom which once prevailed in England, as the readers of Beaumont and Fletcher, and of other poets, well know. They make collarettes, aprons, girdles, and other similar articles, with teeth, strung together by red, blue, and yellow silk, and they suspend these articles, as signs, outside their shops. In this work, they display almost as much taste as the fruiterers exhibit, but I confess that I prefer the fruit to the teeth which can no longer consume it.

I must reserve for another article my comments on the bazaars and markets, which are in their general features quite distinct from the shops.

ABSENT-MINDED PEOPLE.

If it be generally conceded—and few, we should imagine, will be disposed to question the truth of the assertion—that presence of mind is a most excellent and

enviable quality, its antithesis, or as our neighbours aptly designate it, "distraction," may with equal correctness be regarded as exactly the reverse. The one helps us out of our difficulties, the other leads us into them, and that not by any fault of the individual afflicted with the malady, who, being strictly irresponsible for his innate vagaries, can no more hinder his wits from "wool-gathering," than could a certain well-known kleptomaniac refrain from carrying off—in default of other available booty—the tame hedgehog she happened to espy in the hall of a friend's house after an evening party. Absence of mind has ever been a fertile anecdotal theme, and it requires no little precaution to avoid incurring the reproach of "*bis repetita*;" the following specimens, however, partly the fruits of desultory reading, partly original, have found their way into our note-book, and we have grouped them together without any attempt at classification, as more or less comically illustrating the heading of our paper.

An amusing instance of this infirmity is recorded by that indefatigable chronicler Tallemant des Réaux in his notice of Madame de Rohan, mother of the first duke of that name, who was so deplorably subject to "distractions" as to furnish continual entertainment both to court and city. Paying a visit one day, accompanied by a lady friend to M. Deslandes, a grave legal functionary, and being told that he was expected home shortly, she decided on awaiting his return, and meanwhile installed herself comfortably in his usual sitting-room, where, according to her custom, she fell into a reverie, and imagined that she had never left her own house. On the arrival of the magistrate half an hour later, she received him with the respect due to so distinguished a visitor, and insisted on his dining with her and her companion; whereupon M. Deslandes, whose ordinary fare was of the simplest, despatched his servant to the nearest "*traiteur*" in quest of a supplementary dish or two, in honour of the occasion. When the dinner—such as it was—made its appearance, Madame de Rohan, still fancying herself to be the hostess, glanced disparagingly at the meagre repast, and apologised for its insufficiency to her supposed guest, observing that he would probably have dined better at home. Fearing that she might continue in a similar strain, her friend quietly asked her if she knew where she was; and this bringing her to her senses, she suddenly

recollected that she had already accepted an invitation elsewhere, and hurried away without vouchsafing another word to the astonished M. Deslandes, leaving him to enjoy his improvised banquet as best he might.

The Duke de Chevreuse, son of the celebrated Marie de Rohan, was by no means exempt from the family failing. While staying at his country-seat, Vaucresson, he was informed early one morning that his intendant, M. Sconin, was waiting by appointment to see him; and, being at that moment engaged with his correspondence, sent word to his visitor that if he would take a turn in the garden, he would be ready to receive him in half an hour, and this done he resumed his work, and thought no more of the matter. Towards seven o'clock in the evening M. Sconin was again announced, and this time admitted to the presence of the duke, who expressed his regret that he had caused him to lose a day. "Not in the least, monseigneur," replied Sconin; "having had the honour of serving you for several years, I naturally imagined that the half-hour you mentioned might be rather a long one, I therefore started for Paris, where I had some business to transact, dined there, and have just returned to receive your commands." "Ah," said M. de Chevreuse, "my good Sconin, I am afraid that you have had your journey for nothing; for, now I come to think of it, I have not the slightest recollection what they were."

No one was more "distract" than La Fontaine; no one was less practical in the management of his affairs. Not even an important lawsuit in which he was engaged could induce him to quit his abode in the country for the purpose—then universally adopted—of soliciting the good offices of the judges in his favour, until he received a letter from a friend, announcing that the trial was fixed for the following day. His correspondent at the same time sent him a horse, in order that he might have no excuse for delay; and thus provided, the fabulist started on his journey. By the time he had arrived within three or four miles of Paris, he had entirely forgotten the motive of his ride, and bethought himself of paying a visit to a literary colleague residing in the neighbourhood; and being cordially welcomed by his host, remained there all night, utterly oblivious of his lawsuit and everything connected with it. When he awoke next morning, he suddenly

recollected the object of his expedition; and, taking leave of his hospitable entertainer, remounted his steed, and reached the capital exactly an hour after the verdict had been given against him. On being reproached by his friend for his unpardonable negligence, he merely observed that he was perfectly satisfied, "for," he added, "now that I have lost my first cause, I shall at least have no temptation to begin another."

Shortly after the publication of his fables, it was intimated to him that he ought to present a copy to the king, and, acting on the suggestion, he repaired to Versailles, where he was graciously received by Louis the Fourteenth, who in the course of conversation expressed a wish to see the work.

"Ma foi, sire," stammered La Fontaine, after vainly searching his pockets, "I have forgotten to bring it."

During the long struggle for supremacy between the rival composers Glück and Piccini, the latter was presented to Marie Antoinette, who, as is well known, was an enthusiastic partisan of his adversary. Wishing to learn the maestro's opinion of her vocal talent, she requested him to accompany her on the piano, and, when too late to repair the mistake, discovered that in a momentary fit of abstraction, she had selected for the display of her powers an air from *Alceste*. "I never think of it without blushing," the queen afterwards remarked to the Prince de Ligne.

A certain great lady, whose absence of mind was proverbial, happening to meet in society a young widow who had lately lost her husband, condoled with her sympathetically on her bereavement; then, after a pause, during which she lapsed into her accustomed forgetfulness, enquired to the stupefaction of the mourner, "Was he the only one you had?"

A very prolific French dramatic writer, whose failures were far more numerous than his triumphs, had read one of his comedies previous to its representation to a few chosen colleagues, who, one and all, declared it to be excellent; the public, however, thought differently, and the vaunted masterpiece, when at length produced on the stage, was outrageously hissed. Annoyed at having been the dupe of his own gratified vanity, the author complained bitterly of the insincerity of his friends, and, addressing himself to a well-known man of letters, who formed one of the group assembled round

him at the Café Procope—the favourite resort of everybody connected with the theatre, vowed that henceforth he would never submit his productions to the judgment of his fellow-dramatists. "I would rather," he said, "ten thousand times rather read them to persons who have no pretension to talent of any kind, even to a pack of idiots; so, monsieur, if you have no objection to listen to my next comedy, I will read it to you."

A good story is told of M. de Sabran, the author of some highly-esteemed fables, and perhaps the most incorrigible "distract" of his time. While on a visit to Madame de Staël at Coppet, he was in the habit of indulging every day after dinner in a solitary ramble, and one evening remained out of doors so much longer than usual, that his hostess began to grow uneasy at his absence. At length he arrived in the most pitiable condition, splashed from head to foot, and dripping wet up to the knee.

"Where in the world have you been?" asked Madame de Staël.

"Madame," he replied with the greatest calm, "I have been taking my customary walk."

"You must have fallen into the water," she said, "for your feet are positively soaked."

"Only the dew, madame, I assure you. I never once left the broad alley by the mill."

"That explains the state you are in," exclaimed Corinne; "is it possible you never perceived that the water had been turned into that very alley, and that you have been walking in it up to your ankles for the last two hours?"

Munster, Bishop of Copenhagen, was noted for his absence of mind, an infirmity which increased as he advanced in years. He was accustomed, whenever his duties summoned him from home, to hang a placard on his door, announcing, for the benefit of any chance visitor, that he would return at a certain hour. One day, being obliged to attend to some important business in the town, he affixed the usual notice, and, his errand accomplished, came home, and ascended the stairs leading to his modest apartment. On arriving opposite his door, he glanced mechanically at the placard, and, entirely unconscious of his own identity, concluded that he was too early, and waited outside until the clock struck, when he suddenly recollected who and where he was, and let himself in.

This reminds one of General de Laborde, an ex-aide-de-camp of Louis Philippe, who, after making his bow at a ministerial soirée, was so absorbed by his own reflections on leaving, that, while still half-way through a long suite of rooms communicating with each other, he fancied that he had already reached the porter's lodge, and, to the astonishment of all present and his own confusion, exclaimed in a sonorous voice, "Cordon, s'il vous plait!"

Châteaubriand relates in his memoirs that his wife, who had organised for charitable purposes a sale of chocolate manufactured under her own personal superintendence, was so entirely devoted to her philanthropic project that she thought of nothing else; and on more than one occasion so far forgot herself as, instead of subscribing her letters "Vicomtesse de Châteaubriand," to sign them Vicomtesse "de Chocolat."

French actors are rarely on good terms with their managers, being generally apt to regard them as their natural enemies. Few, however, have carried their animosity farther than Arnal. During one of his innumerable lawsuits with the director of the Vaudeville, he deemed it expedient to propitiate his judge by a preliminary visit, and lost no time in soliciting an audience of the president of the tribunal.

"Monsieur," was the unexpected reply of the porter, "he died last night."

"Oh," said Arnal, too deeply intent on his own affairs to realise the other's meaning, "that does not signify in the least, I have only one word to say to him!"

Perhaps, after all, the individual most notoriously subject to this infirmity was the country manager, Thornton, of whom more instances of chronic absence of mind have been related than would fill a volume. The following, which we believe to be authentic, has never to our knowledge appeared in print. Thornton was staying with his wife at Brighton, whether for business or pleasure is not recorded; and, according to his usual custom, started one morning for a stroll on the beach before breakfast. It was nearly high tide, and in the course of his walk the brightness of a pebble just washed by the sea struck his eye, and he took it up in order to examine it more closely. Presently it occurred to him that it was time to return to The Old Ship, where the couple lodged; and, looking at his watch, he discovered it was almost nine o'clock, the hour appointed for the morning meal. Putting the pebble carefully in his

pocket, he mechanically tossed his watch into the water, and reached home just as the shrimps and fried bacon were placed on the table. Their departure having been previously fixed for that day, Mrs. Thornton, after doing ample justice to the dainties provided, and not wishing to be late for the coach, turned to her husband, and enquired what time it was; whereupon the manager, extracting the pebble from his pocket, began to stroke his nose (his invariable habit when in great perplexity), and staring at the stone, fell to wondering how it came there.

"What are you looking at, Mr. Thornton?" asked his astonished wife. "And pray, where is your watch?"

"My dear," he replied with a bewildered air, "I haven't the least idea, unless—" here a fresh inspection of the pebble appeared to suggest some faint remembrance of the substitution—"unless it is at the bottom of the sea!"

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

CUMBERLAND.

ON the Cumberland side of the Eamont Bridge near Penrith, where the great highway for the north crosses the river, and where is the county boundary between Cumberland and Westmoreland, there is, or was till very recently, inscribed on the stone parapet the motto, "Welcome into Cumberland." It is something so unexpected to find a greeting of such warmth and geniality, where, in a general way, you might think to find warnings to vagrants or a demand for toll, that the wayfarer can hardly help being touched with sympathetic feeling, and a Cumbrian bard has well expressed the feeling in a popular song:

Aye, welcome into Cumberland, I've wandered many
a mile
Amongst the hills and valleys that form our native
isle;
But no sound seems half so welcome let me wander
where I will,
As, you're welcome into Cumberland, you're welcome
in it still.

And this note of welcome puts us into a good temper with the county from the very beginning. And yet it is a region, this entrance to Cumberland, in which Nature does not appear in her most hospitable mood. To the west lies the lake district, the grand outline of its mountains cutting the horizon; to the east the gloomy fells, the wildest region in England, stretch-

ing away with hardly a break to the valley of the Trent—a region of forests, chases, moors, and morasses, where once the wolf and the outlaw might range unchecked, from Sherwood by Nottingham, to Inglewood by Carlisle.

The highest part of this range of fells lies to the right of us as we travel northwards. Crossfell with its gloomy legends—once called, it is said, Fiendsfell, from the demons that thronged its summit, demons eventually exorcised by the missionary monk Augustin, who, in memory of his visit and in menace to the demons, built a cross on the summit, whence its name of Crossfell. The demons in question no doubt were demons of wind and storm, and in spite of the saint's exorcism the gills and gorges of this upland region are still of the wildest and windiest. Along the summit often rests a long roll of clouds stretching in well-defined lines, sometimes hovering above, sometimes resting on the hill-tops, but oftener wreathing and working well down the mountain-side, known to the dwellers by the fells as the Helm. And parallel to this cloud-bank, to the westward, is often to be seen another huge bank as if anchored in the skies, which is known as the Bar, and between the two is the dominion of the storm-fiends, where the winds blow and bluster, while the country beyond may be enjoying tranquil weather.

The metropolis of this wild region is Aldston, with its population of miners, where lead and silver have been worked, according to written records, from the days of Henry the First, and with traces of earlier workings when, under the tranquil Roman sway, adventurous metal-seekers found their way even into these wild regions. And here the footsteps of the Romans are still to be traced in the Maiden way that holds its lonely course over hill and dale—no longer trodden by human feet, for the frosts and storms of centuries have, everywhere, laid bare and ploughed up the foundation of rude stones. Aldston itself, with its congress of streams and woods—the head-waters of the south Tyne—is not at all a dreary or inhospitable place. Healthy enough it is, too, as witness the story of a wonderful old man, one John Taylor, born at Garrigill, a village higher up the stream. Taylor, who died about the year 1772, is said to have remembered Mirk Monday, the great solar eclipse of 1652, when he was a boy about fourteen years old, and he might easily, in

the course of a long day's walk, have met with the Yorkshire champion of long life, the Henry Jenkins, of Swaledale, mentioned in a former paper; and these two men, if we are to believe their proofs, could have told the story of England as eye-witnesses from the time of Henry the Eighth to that of George the Third.

Between Penrith and the fells the road crosses the Eden by a bridge, and just in the snug valley of the Eden lies the old mansion of Edenhall, the seat of the Musgraves, whose luck is well known to be dependent on the safety of a certain glass cup. Near the hall is a well dedicated to St. Cuthbert, about which the fairies were holding their revels, when some member of the family coming suddenly upon them snatched up the cup—the loving-cup from which in turn they were drinking. The fairies pursued, but failed to reach the culprit, after whom they flung this distich:

Whene'er this cup shall break or fall,
Farewell the luck of Edenhall.

The cup, which is still preserved, is of green and variously-coloured glass, not above six inches high, and may be Venetian, but has rather the stamp of Eastern art, not of a high character—Persian for choice—and may have been brought home as a relic by some pilgrim or crusader. The ornamental case that holds it is a more meritorious work of art, dating from the fifteenth century, and bears the sacred monogram.

A little lower down the stream, for the fisherman who is privileged to throw a fly across, the Eden here affords some delightful pools; and farther down lies Salkeld, with its ancient church and fortified church tower,

Half house of God, half castle 'gainst the Scot,
where the Londoner may feel a touch of kinship with the Cumbrian, for who built the church, do you think?—who but Dick Whittington? So says tradition, anyhow, which claims Dick as a native of Great Salkeld, which he thus gratefully endowed. He would have supplied the tower, too, with bells, which were duly forwarded, but were stopped at Kirby Stephen, in Westmoreland, and taken possession of by the envious inhabitants of that town. Close by is the mystic stone circle known as Long Meg and her daughters, "that family forlorn." The belief was, that chip a piece out of Meg and she would bleed, the whole family being enchanted; while, if anyone succeeded in counting the number

of stones correctly, the enchantment would be dissolved. But nobody has yet succeeded in the task.

Lower down the river we come to Lazonby, with Kirk Oswald on the opposite bank of the river, a fine six-arched bridge connecting the two. An old ruined castle on a hill a quarter of a mile to the eastward of Kirk Oswald, was the stronghold of Hugh de Morville, one of the murderers of Thomas à Becket. And here the knightly assassin lived out his life after the murder, undisturbed, unless by qualms of conscience or dread of the Church's interdict. Afterwards the castle came to the Lord Dacres, of the south, one of whom abandoned and dismantled the old castle in 1604, when a great portion of the ornamental ceilings and embellishments were bought by Lord William Howard, the "Belted Will" of Sir Walter Scott's minstrelsy, and went to Naworth Castle.

From the fells to the eastward run many pretty becks, as the streams are locally called, and it is curious to note that on the other side of the ridge, where the waters fall towards the Tyne, the streams are all called burns. Many pretty becks fall into the Eden, and one of the most charming of these is Croglin Water, with fine falls and rapids plunging through a narrow gorge, and a pleasant old seat called Nunnery. The nunnery itself was placed on the higher ground near Ainstable—nothing but a memorial-stone is left to show its site—a nunnery founded, it is said, by William Rufus, who strikes one as a queer fellow for the purpose.

A little further north are Cumrew and Cumwhitton, names both recalling Celtic influences, and between the two, on a desolate tract called King Harry, stands the imposing Druidic circle, known in the district as the Grey Yauds. Above Cumrew, too, the fell is crowned by a huge cairn called Cardunneth, showing that this wild region was once the scene of stirring events and ancient rites, of which the memory is lost in the mists of time.

Still following the course of the river Eden, we come to Corby—the title Howard of Corby is as much thought of as a dukedom in those parts—and the beautiful grounds of Corby are freely opened to visitors, an example that wants a good deal of following. The house is ancient in its core, but rebuilt in the classic taste of the eighteenth century, and in Elizabeth's days belonged to the Salkelds, one of whom was sheriff of the county, and as such obnoxious to the

freebooting borderers. The sheriff had caught one of these—a Graham—

They hae grippit Hughie the Græme,
And brought him up through Carlisle toon—

who was lying for execution in Carlisle Castle. His brother Jack had ridden out to Corby with hope, perhaps, of speech of the stern sheriff, when passing the gate of the castle he saw a child of the sheriff's playing before the door. The outlaw tempted him to his side with an apple, and then saying, "Master, will you ride?" lifted him to his saddle-bow, and away for the border. And as it was now a life against a life, the sheriff had to give the doomed outlaw's for his own boy's, and that was thought fair exchange on the border.

The route by the river Eden to Carlisle is the most picturesque and interesting, but the main road and railway follow more directly the valley of Petteril through a bleak moorland country, once known as the Forest of Inglewood, well stocked with deer, and with traditions of Robin Hood and his bold outlaws—a hunting-ground for the Plantagenets, disafforested in Henry the Eighth's time, and now divided into farms.

In the centre of this quondam forest lies High Heskett, with Tarn Wadling close by, the tarn now drained and bearing crops of barley, but with legendary interest as the site of Celtic romance. Here are still some traces of Castle Hewin—or Owen—a Celtic fortress on an eminence north-east of the once lake, the seat, according to legend, of an enchanter celebrated in one of the border ballads. It was when King Arthur lived in Merry Carlisle, and a fair damsel came to beg a boon of him. A Carlisle knight has shent both her and her lover. She has escaped, but her lover lies in durance vile in the castle dungeon of this grim baron of Tarn Wadling. Arthur calls for Excalibur, and rides off to the rescue, but finds the enchanter's spells too powerful, and, fixed like a fly in a spider's web, is only released on swearing to return on New Year's Day, and bring the enchanter an answer to the question:

What thing it is all women moste desyre?

Here the story provokingly ends, without answering the riddle or unravelling the fate of the lovers.

With this we are in sight of Merry Carlisle itself, once the great place of arms and fortress of the western marches. It is now the centre of a network of railways,

for the old Border warfare is transformed into a war of rival lines, with no worse design upon the passing traveller than to carry him off to Glasgow, or Edinburgh, or the Highlands, by their own particular system. Like many old towns with a stirring history, Carlisle is perhaps a little disappointing from the modern and rather commonplace aspect of the city. But there is the castle, with a fine view from its walls of the amphitheatre of distant hills, and the old walls on the west side are still standing.

The early history of Carlisle, like that of the rest of Cumberland, is a little obscure, but it seems to have been the capital of a small independent principality lying between the Cymry of Wales and the British kingdom of Strathclyde, and never to have actually passed under Saxon dominion. The Northumbrians may sometimes have harried the country, and the monks of Lindisfarne penetrated freely into wild and secluded regions, where they might sometimes, perhaps, come upon churches and religious settlements colonised directly from the mother-church of Iona. Cuthbert, we know, visited Carlisle, and we are told how his friend Hereberht, a venerable priest, came there to meet him from his hermitage on an island in Derwentwater Lake, still known as Herbert's Isle, and how Hereberht besought his friend, who warned him that they must not expect to meet again, that as a last favour he would pray that they might both die in the same hour, which so happened, as Baeda relates—Cuthbert on his storm-beaten rock in the Northern Sea, and Hereberht on his sweet island in the bosom of the lake.

Two centuries after that, we read of Carlisle being destroyed by the Danes, and left desolate; but what became of its inhabitants, and, indeed, of the Celtic population of the region generally, there is nothing to show. They have left abundant traces in the names of places, of mountains, and of rivers, but the existing population of Cumberland are Scandinavian rather than Celtic in every point of physique and language. And yet here were mountains and wilds, where a people like the Cymry and the Gael might be expected to maintain a national existence. Probably they were gradually replaced—absorbed, rather than extirpated, by a constant trickle of emigration from the bare hills and wild fiords of Norway; such as peopled many of the Western Hebrides

and partly the Isle of Man. The result was a mixed population ready to own the sway of the strongest lord whether of Scotland or England. Rufus seems to have been the first English king who asserted more than a nominal sovereignty; building a castle on the deserted site of Caerleol, and colonising the waste lands with immigrants—English, and, perhaps, Flemish. Once having cast in its lot with England, Cumberland became very much a military settlement, in which service against the Scots was the one overpowering necessity to which all tenures were subject. We hear of nag-tenements and foot-tenements, the tenants of which were bound to fight either on foot or upon the small wiry horses of the country, and in the reign of Edward the First these forces were ranged under the command of a Lord Warden, whose duty it was to place watchmen to fire beacons and muster all sensible men between sixteen and sixty years of age. The county is still divided into wards as if the whole land were a camp, and the parishes nearest the border are divided into quarters, an arrangement of which perhaps the Roman camps so numerous in the neighbourhood formed the model. Under the warden are bailiffs, each with his district, whose duties are to “rise redily to fraye and followinge.”

In the old days, when the beacons were lighted far and near, and the muckle town-bell of Carlisle was rung, women, as well as men, turned out for the fray—on the hill-sides, with their aprons full of stones, and in the city with kettles and pans full of boiling water to heave over the thronging Scots from the city walls.

All this was stirring enough in the doing, but becomes rather monotonous in the telling, as raid succeeds raid, each with the same features of fire, and waste, and desolation. To this day the boys of Cumberland retain a memory of these days in their game of Scots and English—something like prisoners' base, with forays on either side, with captures and valiant rescues, such rescues as Walter Scott delighted to record—witness that celebrated by the ballad which relates

How they have ta'en bould Kinmont Willie,
On Hairibee to hang him up.

The once famous Hairibee, or Harrowby Hill, lies to the north of the city on the London Road. On the eve of the execution, it will be remembered, bold Buccleugh with a party of men, more or less kinsmen of Willie's, made a dash over the border,

and breaking into the castle, delivered Willie from his cell, and carried him off in triumph. This high-handed proceeding at a time when the two countries were at peace, exasperated Queen Elizabeth to a high degree, and Buccleugh narrowly escaped punishment.

The very last raid made by the Scotch was actually after the union of the two crowns, and while James was at Berwick on his progress towards London, when several hundred Scots rode on a plundering expedition through Cumberland.

King James was himself so anxious to thoroughly unite the two kingdoms, that he forbade the familiar word borders to be used, and commanded that the district should now be called the midlands; but the alteration was “aboon his might,” and the borders they have always been, and probably will continue to be.

In his zeal to civilise these new midlands, James succeeded in transplanting the whole of the Graemes of the Netherby clan, who were shipped off at Workington, some for Ireland, and others for the Low Countries. But it was long before the bold borderers could be reclaimed from their lawless habits, notwithstanding that the persuasive influence of Hairibee was freely, not to say ferociously, used in the process. On the other side of the border, Jedburgh justice, “hang a man first, and try him afterwards,” has long been proverbial, and Carlisle justice, as far as the borderers were concerned, was very much of the same character.

The castle of Carlisle suffered more during the present century, under the guardianship of the defunct Board of Ordinance, than from all the sieges and bombardments it has undergone. But there is still enough left to give a good general idea of the great royal palace, fortress, and prison of the north. Mary's Tower, indeed, was pulled down fifty years ago, and with it have in a measure disappeared the associations with the unhappy Queen of Scots, who was here for a short time a prisoner. The outer ward, once almost abandoned and deserted, is now again enlivened by martial sights and sounds. For under the new army organisation Carlisle is now the regimental station of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Regiment, late the thirty-fourth and fifty-fifth—the former noted for having, during the Peninsular War, cut off and captured the whole Thirty-fourth French Regiment; coming out of action wearing

the caps of the French regiment instead of their own. When last seen by the present writer, the regiment still kept the red and white French tuft that commemorated their exploit, and marched out with the French drum-major's staff at the head of the band; but whether these distinctions have survived the recent amalgamating process is more than this deponent knoweth.

The castle, though modernised and spoilt, still retains the features of its inner and outer wards, with their fine gateways adorned by battered escutcheons of the Plantagenet kings, and the fine tower of the keep, and the view from the castle walls over the rich and well-peopled county, with its woods and streams, and the bold amphitheatre of hills. There are Skiddaw and Saddleback with Fiendsfell, and the rugged hills of Northumberland, the misty outlines of Scotland, with solitary Criffel looming above the waters of Solway; a view that inspires an indefinite longing for the wings of the dove, or preferably of the eagle, to take flight to those distant summits. The lower courses of the keep are built of squared stones, doubtless taken from the Roman wall that passed just below on the northern bank of the river, stretching to the right towards the fells of Northumberland, and to the left to the sands of Solway. But cultivation has destroyed most of its traces, although here and there the foundations of the grand bulwark may be traced among the green meadows.

Probably the toughest siege sustained by castle and city was in the civil wars, on the king's side, when citizens and garrison were driven to eating horse-flesh from the failure of provisions, the place holding out till the news of Naseby fight showed the uselessness of further resistance. But Carlisle, perhaps, is most distinguished as the very last of the old walled cities to be besieged and captured in regular form. In 1745, when young Prince Charlie encamped before the city, it was hardly capable of serious resistance against other artillery than bows and arrows. But then the prince was little better provided than his ancestor at Flodden, perhaps not so well indeed in the matter of big guns, and had almost determined to raise the siege, when the garrison—a few companies of invalids as formidable to an enemy as the beef-eaters of the Tower—determined on surrender. And so Prince Charlie made his entry in triumph on a cream-coloured

horse, with a hundred pipers blowing before him, while George, at St. James's, was thinking of packing his portmanteau. But in a few weeks more the inconstant Highlanders were pouring back over the border, and Carlisle, with a hastily improvised garrison, was left to bear the brunt of the Duke of Cumberland's advance. This time the city held out for a week, and gave the prince the chance of rallying his troops, to little purpose, for the last fatal fight of Culloden. And then the city gates were adorned with human heads, and the ghastly barbarities of an obsolete code were revived. On neither side had the fighting been of a very desperate character, but the judicial slaughter that followed threw a halo of pity and compassion over the followers of a lost cause.

When I came next by merry Carlisle
Oh sad, sad seem'd the town an' eerie!
The auld, auld men came out and wept,
Oh, maiden, come ye to seek yere dearie!

We should like the cathedral better if it looked more ancient. Perhaps there would have been no cathedral at all by this time, had it not been practically rebuilt. But the choir and the grand and glowing east window are undoubtedly impressive. The nave is, or was till lately, walled off—Scottish fashion—and formed the parish church of St. Mary's. Here, one day in the last century, Walter Scott married the girl of his heart, who was from Brampton, a true Cumbrian lass, whom he had first met at Gilsland Spa, a gay little watering-place among the hills on the border-line between Cumberland and Northumberland.

Why not for Gilsland then, as we are in the humour?—a charming route by rail, the line that ends at smoky Newcastle. First there is Wetheral with just the gateway left of an old priory, and Corby close by, already chronicled, and a splendid vista of river and rich country from the viaduct ninety feet above the water-level. Then there is How Mill with the white tower of Edmund Castle in the distance, and then a glimpse of Talkin Tarn, where the hills begin to rise from the moorland level, and further on Brampton, at some little distance from the line in a deep narrow valley at the junction of two streams, the Irthing and the Gelt. A little way up the latter stream is a rock that still bears a Roman inscription, testifying to the toughness of the material if otherwise illegible. Further on still is Naworth, where a pause must be made, for Naworth

and Lanercost Priory are in many ways interesting.

Naworth was once the seat of the Dacres of the North, who are said to have earned their name in the crusades.

A hardy race on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white and crosses red,
Arrayed beneath the banners tall.
That streamed o'er Acre's conquered wall.

A stirring, passionate, headstrong race of men, these old D'Acres, fierce in war, but still more fortunate in love. Ralph, Lord Dacre, won the barony of Gilsland by carrying off the heiress, then a ward of King Edward the Second, from under the very nose of Thomas de Beauchamp, the stout Earl of Warwick, her guardian. Another Ralph, later on, was killed at Towton Moor, and lies buried in the church of Saxton in Yorkshire. In the next century, Thomas, Lord Dacre, won another barony, that of Greystoke, by carrying off another royal ward, from the custody of Henry Clifford, who had intended to enrich his own family with her possessions. This same Lord Dacre commanded the reserve of light horsemen, his own borderers, at Flodden. He had the prudence to refrain from joining the Pilgrimage of Grace, but did not escape the suspicion of the court; and distinguished himself again at Solway Moss, when, with a handful of horsemen, he put the army of the Scots to flight; a disgrace that broke the heart of James the Fifth, just as his luckless daughter Mary was born.

"It came with a lass, and it will go with a lass," were the unfortunate monarch's last words, and the same prophecy would apply to the Dacres. For the grandson of this Lord Thomas became a king's ward in his turn, and was assigned to the Duke of Norfolk, who married his widowed mother. And the heir of these warlike knights was exercising his muscles one day in the hall of his tutor, Sir Richard Fulmerstone, leaping upon a great wooden vaulting-horse, when the horse fell over, and the young lord was bruised to death. Thus his three young sisters became co-heiresses, and were married, out of hand, to three sons of Norfolk. Elizabeth Dacre, Bess of the Braid Apron, as she was called from the extent of her possessions, then scarcely fourteen years old, was married to Lord William, the Belted Will of the border ballads, who was very little older. Naworth fell to the share of the boy bridegroom, but was not to be had without a struggle. There were still plenty of Dacres in

Cumberland, sons of old Lord Thomas, who set up an entail, limiting the estate to male heirs. The Howards won at law, but the Dacres took to arms. At that time the Howards had fallen into disgrace, the duke lost his head, and the family possessions were escheated. But then the Dacres were in no better odour, and when Laurence Dacre raised the county and fortified himself at Naworth, Lord Hunsden was sent against him with a strong force. But all the borders were up for the Dacres. Lord Hunsden writes: "The beacons burning all night; so, as I found every hill full of men, both horsemen and footmen, crying and shouting as they had been mad." Not venturing to attack Naworth, Hunsden was followed by Dacre, who, in the pride of his heart, offered battle to the queen's forces on a moor near the Gelt. It was the last ding-dong battle on the borders, and even the women fought stoutly for the Dacres; but discipline prevailed, and the borderers were driven off in rout, while Dacre fled into Scotland.

After this Lord William settled in peace at Naworth, but found the castle all dismantled and ruined, and set to work to build and repair, after the fashion of a nobleman of the period. The Dacres had a fellow-feeling with the wild borderers, but not so Lord William. He had kept one strong tower of the old fortress, and this he established as his own snuggery, after the fashion of Montaigne, although by no means so genial a person as the illustrious essayist. For down below were dungeons, where moss-troopers might clank their irons, and tradition points out a grove where culprits were hung. A very ogres' castle was Naworth to the Hughies of Howden and Wills-o'-th'-Wall, and especially to the wives and daughters of the borderers. For the rest, Lord William was a just man, no doubt, if unsparing, who lived in patriarchal fashion, with sons, daughters, and their wives and husbands about him, fifty-two in family, according to tradition; and with a garrison of a hundred and forty men. A man with his cultured side, too, with his manuscripts and library of rare volumes, and, with an eye to the court as well as the camp, riding up to London in springtime to his house in St. Martin's Lane.

It is pleasant to find, too, that Lord William's tower is still in existence, and pretty much as he left it. The great fire which almost destroyed the castle in 1844, spared the tower of the old Warden of the

Marches. From him are descended the Earl of Carlisle, who now occupies Naworth, and the Howards of Corby.

Memorials of the old Dacres are to be found in Lanercost Priory, partly an interesting ruin, and partly in use as a parish church. There are the monuments of Humphrey, brother and successor of the Lord Dacre who fell at Towton, and of Thomas Lord Dacre, the hero of Flodden and of Solway Moss. The priory lies almost on the line of the Roman wall, and the materials of a former station in the wall, known as Castle Steeds, were used in its construction. The tradition is that it was founded by one De Vallibus or Vaux, vulgarly, "O' the Wall," a Norman intrusive settler, who took possession of the fort at Castle Steeds, and murdered the original and native owner Gilles Beuth, from whom it is said Bewcastle took its name. De Vaux founded the priory, it is said, to expiate the murder, and Castle Steeds was demolished, and its site sown with salt. As a further penance, tradition has it, De Vaux renounced arms, took to the law, and came as justice itinerant into Cumberland, A.D. 1176. Of course the critics say that all this is unsupported, nay, even contradicted on many points by documents and dates, but the real history and motives of human action are rarely engrossed on parchment.

Gilsland is the favourite sanatorium of the district, reminding one of the simple German spas, with its quiet life of hotels and boarding-houses, with charming scenery in the Irthing, and a fetish stone of local celebrity, called the Popping Stone, upon which it is said Walter Scott put the eventful question to his future wife. Not far from the station of Rose Hill, and just on the border of the two counties, is shown an old house that was long known as Mumps Ha, a favourite resort of those who had reason to dread the attentions of the sheriff of either Cumberland or Northumberland. Here the reader of Guy Mannerling first meets with Dandie Dinmont, and Meg Merrilies reappears on the scene, with the as yet unrecognised heir of Ellan-gowan. The country between here and the Scottish border, known as Bewcastle Waste, where Dandie was attacked by the gipsy freebooters, was once a favourite haunt of the moss-troopers, but its wastes and morasses have been reclaimed and improved, though it is still a dreary and scantily populated region. Before the days of the School Board it was reported that

there were two schoolmasters in Bewcastle with ten pounds a year each and a "Whittle gate," this last being a customary right of board and lodging with each householder in succession.

No striking natural feature marks the boundary line of Scotland and England in Cumberland, and indeed the country north of Carlisle, a broad tract of low ground, partly cultivated, partly heathy common, is not inviting to the Rambler, though good fishing may be had along its streams. Liddel Strength, near the banks of the Esk, a strong embankment on a steep and lofty cliff, with a huge fort on the weakest side, has borne the brunt of the first fierce inrush of the Scots many a time and oft, and there are remains of a strong castle, with two moats, some way lower down the Esk near Longtown. Between these is Netherby, still the seat of a Graham, as in the days when Young Lochinvar came out of the west. Close by is Arthuret, whose ancient battlemented church is worth visiting, and contains the tomb of Sir James Graham—curious to associate the statesman whose features were so familiar to readers of Punch some quarter of a century ago, with the hard riding "Grames of the Netherby clan." In the churchyard, too, is buried Archie Armstrong, who lost his place as jester in the court of Charles the First, through plucking Archbishop Laud by the sleeve as he went into the council convened on the news of the disastrous reception of Laud's liturgy in Scotland. "Wha's feule noo?" asked Archie; and complaint being made by the proud archbishop, order in council followed to dismiss the jester with his coat pulled over his head. But he proved himself no fool in this matter either, escaping the misfortunes of his master, and retiring to his native country with sufficient gear.

Archie, by kings and princes graced of late,
Jested himself into a fair estate.

Conspicuous on the sandy levels of Solway Firth is a column of modern origin recording the death of Edward the First on his way to overrun Scotland—this near Burgh-on-Sands. Then there is Bowness, where the Roman wall came to an end, and farther south, Holme Cultram, a very ancient seat of monastic life probably, with the remains of a once famous Cistercian abbey. Within the walls of this abbey, it is said, the famous wizard Michael Scott ended his days, and was buried in its cloisters—he and his magic books. Scott, indeed, gives the wizard to Melrose, but

in that he was perhaps biassed by national prejudice.

As the coast bends northwards there are pleasant bathing-nooks to be met with—Silloth and Allonby, for instance, with their fresh crisp breezes—and presently we come upon an iron and coal district, with Workington as a centre, where there are mines worked since early in the last century and now stretching far under the sea.

From Workington we follow the river inland to Cockermouth, a quiet little town in the midst of placid rural scenery, with a fine mediæval castle in ruins standing just at the junction of the rivers Cocker and Derwent, a castle that passed into the possession of many powerful families—the Percys and the Nevilles among others—before it became the residence of the Wyndhams. This is Wordsworth's native town, where his father was an attorney and agent to the Lowther family, then represented by the "wicked" Earl Lonsdale, who attempted to drive his carriage through his Majesty's grounds one drawing-room day at St. James's and fought a duel with the officer who stopped him.

A little nearer the sea lies the village of Brigham, where, in 1653, George Fox, the Quaker, preached for three hours in the churchyard, and converted many hundreds. Soon after he visited the church again, and engaged in a long theological argument with the vicar, Mr. Wilkinson, who lost his dinner in consequence. The discussion lasted till nightfall, and the result seems to have been the conversion of the vicar and most of his congregation. And here we have the beginning of Quakerism in Cumberland, of which nothing is now left but a few deserted meeting-houses and some quiet burial-grounds among the hills.

We must rapidly pass over St. Bees—from the Celtic saint, Bega—with the fine church of a former abbey, partly used as a theological college; the ruins, small but very beautiful, of Calder Abbey; Irton, with its family of Irtons settled there before the Conquest; the quaint little town of Egremont; and Ravenglass, famous for oysters. Muncaster, close by, has an old castle of the Penningtons, with a modern seat attached, where is kept a "luck" like that of Edenhall, in the form of a glass bowl, which Henry the Sixth is said to have given to the then existing Pennington, who sheltered him, a fugitive, after the Battle of Hexham.

From this point the mountains press

closely upon the seashore, and Black Comb is a conspicuous object and sea-mark, with a magnificent view from the top, the one spot in the kingdom where can be seen at once part of Scotland, Ireland, England, and Wales, with the Isle of Man set in the midst of the waves.

And now there remains nothing but the lake country, which can hardly be worthily dealt with at the fag end of this paper. And, indeed, in the presence of mountain, lake, and waterfall, human history seems for a time to lose its interest. The clouds that wreathe about the hill-tops, the constant song of the mountain streams in this land abounding with water, the tinkle of the sheep-bell, and the murmur of bees in the heather, occupy the senses, to the exclusion of mundane affairs. But to approach Derwentwater from the fells on a soft and misty day of autumn and from some wooded height, to look out upon a sea of white vapour which presently rolls up like a curtain, and discloses the shining lake, a heavenly blue, with white sails and wooded islands dotted on its surface! Another roll of the curtain, and Skiddaw comes in view—Skyday, so called from the height of it, as old Robinson has it—Skiddaw, with his cap of white fleecy clouds:

When Skyday has a cap
Scuffle wots full well of that.

Scawfell that is—the highest peak of England, which frowns down from the other end of Borrowdale. Or, as Wordsworth sings of Skiddaw, with true poetic vein:

He shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castally.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III.

CHAPTER VII. DAVEY IS SILENT.

DAVEY, covering Hilda's clasped hands with his own, held them firmly and tenderly, as might a mother those of a frightened child.

He glanced sharply from one to the other of the strange group before him.

Then his keen grey eyes met Hester's, and a challenge seemed to pass from one to the other; his flashing as the steel blade flashes when drawn upon an enemy, hers fixed, gloomy, defiant, darkening in their

deep orbits with a sombre fire. He drew a long breath, as he clasped his hands more tightly upon Hilda's.

"Then I have come too late," he said with despairing passion in his look and voice. "You have been playing the Judas again, only this time with a difference." Then he bent towards the white quivering face near his shoulder, and his voice shook with tender pity. "Hilda," he murmured, "Hilda, my poor child, take courage!"

"I will," she answered, nerved by his words to a new strength; "and you, Davey, you will help me and Ralph—you will tell him what you know to be the truth, that she, my dearest mother, knows not what she says."

The words were almost whispered in his ear, yet Hester caught them.

"One calls me Judas, the other says I am mad. Ralph Stirling, to which opinion are you ready to say amen?"

But Ralph took no heed of this appeal. He seemed as one dazed and dumb. With one hand he grasped the mantel, the other strained back the hair from his temple. His face was white as that of a statue, his lips set in hard lines.

His ears had listened, without one shadow of credence, to a ghastly and terrible slander of the one name on earth dearest to him. The might of his love for Hilda had taught him a certain forbearance and gentleness towards the utterer of things that would have been the basest of lies, but that they were the grim fancies of a madwoman. He had suddenly been brought face to face—or so he thought—with a family skeleton, a ghastly presence with which Hilda had been dwelling year by year, until the fearful thing had grown familiar to her; a thing to be hidden from all eyes by the sacred mantle of a daughter's love, to be faced with the resolute endurance of an absolute devotion. He had even repented him of those few hot words that had escaped from him in the heat and amaze of Hester's unlooked-for denunciation of the cherished dead.

But now there was something in Davey's face, in Davey's cry of bitter regretfulness, "Then I have come too late!" that made him fear he knew not what.

The ordeal was all the harder to bear, too, because it came hurrying upon the heels of an hour so pure and holy, so exquisite in its idyllic and passionate content.

Still, in taking that dear gift of Hilda's love, had he not taken all herself, her joys and sorrows, fears and trials too? Should he shrink from sharing with her to the full, even this, the cruellest and bitterest that could well blight a young life, and sadden a young heart? These thoughts had flashed through his mind, like lightning across a stormy sky; had given him patience; had taught him some forbearance towards the woman who was Hilda's mother.

But now—what of Davey's troubled face, what of the challenge that had shot from his eyes to Hester's, and from Hester's back again? Was there some method in this madness? Did base and horrible design lurk, where he had fancied only strange delusions and the wild distorted thoughts of a morbid and disordered mind?

Pale and bewildered, Ralph stood staring at Davey, who in his turn watched Hester, while Hilda's streaming eyes were on her lover's face, and every breath she drew was half a sob.

Hester, having put that mocking question to the man whose heart she was tearing with her bitter words, as the hawk with claw and talon tears its prey, waited to see what he would answer.

But Ralph said nothing to her; never turned his head her way; never looked upon her; hardly seemed to hear her.

Why had Davey been so harsh to her? he was thinking; why had he called her a Judas? Was that the way to treat one who knew not what she said?

"Which are you ready to say amen to—which?" said Hester again.

She spoke imperially, as might an empress to an unreasonable and rebellious subject. The colour was mounting to her cheeks, the fire to her eyes; the beauty long since dead and buried, the beauty of life and light and colour, was rising from its grave, in the likeness it had worn when its spell led Gabriel captive among the hay-scented meadows.

"Well, since you are dumb," she continued with a harsh and strident laugh, "listen to me once again. Mad or wicked—be I which I may—you owe me a hearing. You bade me try you—put your love for Hilda to the test. I have done so. Give her up, resign all claim to her. How can my daughter wed the man whose father's sin drove her own father to his death?"

"Peace, woman!" shrieked Davey, putting Hilda away, and striding to Ralph's side.

"You will kill him; you will drive him mad!"

"That would be tit for tat, indeed," said Hester with a smile.

The silence that followed seemed to be rent with the pitiful sound of each shuddering breath, that heaved Ralph's breast as he strove to wrestle with himself.

Nor vainly. The sweat stood dank and glistening on his brow, the muscles round about his mouth worked and twitched, but he spoke calmly enough when he forced his voice.

"Hush!" he said, laying his hand on Davey's arm; "be gentle with her, Davey, she knows not what she says."

Hester hearing, turned upon him fiercely.

"I know not what I say? I am mad—the victim of mad fancies, vain delusions, am I? Well, then, listen to the story of my madness, listen to all it has taught me."

But Davey was by her side, grasping her hands as though they were held in a vice.

"In the name of Heaven hold your peace now! As you hope for mercy yourself, show mercy now!"

His voice thrilled through the room, and seemed to go trembling out into the radiance beyond. He might as well have striven to stem the flow of the river, as strive to stay Hester with that passionate appeal.

"In the name of Heaven," she echoed, "give to Geoffrey Stirling's son the message his dying father committed to you. Death cut the words across, but what was the one word wanting? What was the word that died upon a dead man's lips? 'Tell Ralph to make——' then came the death-rattle, and the last trembling breath; but you and I, Davey, knew what the last word was, as well as though it had been spoken. 'Tell Ralph to make—reparation!' and you have been unfaithful, you who vowed such fealty to the master you professed to love, have proved yourself a traitor."

As the word "traitor" left Hester's lips, the brain-lethargy that had wrapped Ralph round like a thick garment, muffling the voices of those about him to his ear and stretching like a veil across his vision, seem to break and clear.

There was something—some terrible, some monstrous misunderstanding underlying all this war of words—something more than the mere ravings of a mad-woman, since others beside Hester Devenant had part and lot in it.

What was this halting message from that solemn death-bed, of which Cuthbert Deane had told him but the mutilated story? What was this solemn charge to make reparation? Why had he not heard of it before?

"What did my dear father say? Tell me, Davey, keeping nothing back," he pleaded.

A sore wonder and amaze took possession of Hilda as she heard her lover speak thus, and read the agony in Davey's face as he listened.

Were these haunting phantoms, these delirious fancies, which had been in her eyes but as the hallucinations of an exalted brain, taking new and tangible form and shape? Was there some truth—some horrible, nay, impossible truth—in them, after all? If so, how should she best show to Ralph her entire sympathy, her nearness, in the cloud of thick darkness that was gathering about his head?

She moved to his side; her hand sought his, nestled there, and never shrank from the vice-like grasp of the cold fingers which crushed her own pitilessly.

So, in the "good old times," that must have been such very bad old times, before medical science knew of any anodyne for the anguish of the surgeon's knife, may hand have clasped hand fearlessly as nerve and flesh were severed.

For the iron was entering into Ralph's soul. What cared he for Hester Devenant's ravings? Had not all Becklington spoken of her as one not altogether accountable—one whose violent and undisciplined passions had held possession of her, even as of old demons inhabited human creatures, rending and tearing them at their will?

But the piteous appeal, the despairing pain of Davey's face, what did these things mean?

"He was not himself—wasn't my master. Master Ralph, dying tongues babble of strange things."

"Not himself!" cried Hester with mocking fury; "not himself! Say, rather, that after being a sham and a lie through 'all the long and weary years' (you will remember, Davey, those were his very words—'the long and weary years'), he was his very self that night—the night in which he died. 'I do repent!' he cried; 'I do confess! Pray God I may find pardon and peace.' What did you answer? 'I am praying, master, with my whole fervent heart.'"

What horrible mockery was this—this tale told by a madwoman? What were these words put into the mouth of a dying man? If those dear lips ever uttered such remorseful prayers, such cries for mercy and forgiveness, then must the clouds of delirium have darkened the clear mind, then must lying devils have gained access to the failing brain. It could not be—it could not be—that there was any truth in what this cruel woman said!

Tighter, tighter grew Ralph's clutch upon his dear love's hand; closer, closer did Hilda gather herself to his side.

Whatever had to be borne, let them bear it together.

"If you want a confirmation of the story I am telling," continued Hester fiercely, "look at your faithful henchman's face. I tell you, that through all the years—long and weary, too, to me, as well as to the man I hated—he, Davey, was my tool. I won him to be my friend, day by day he came to me, and we spoke together on one well-beloved theme—his master. Never once did he come and go without adding some little thread to the net I was weaving. Little thing she told me; little baits I threw, at which he nibbled; strengthened my plan, gave me new zest, urged me on to stronger efforts."

"Did I not say well, that she had been a Judas to me?" broke out Davey here, in a voice of anguish. "I would have died to serve the man to whom I owed all I had on earth, and she turned me into a tool against him—she did more, she baited the hook with her daughter's love, the love that was not hers to give; she led me on, making me believe in what I hoped for. I tell you she has let me call her 'mother,' my lips have touched her hand, her cheek—I could curse them now for such caresses given to a traitress; but at the time I thought myself most blest; I saw in my heated fancy, Hilda my wife—her mother, mine; and so, unknowingly, I played my master false, telling this woman of his comings and his goings—for I loved to talk of him."

"And loved to write of him too," put in Hester, dominating Davey's voice with her own, and holding Ralph as by a spell, by her passion and resolve; "as you did when I was in Paris years ago; telling me of his wealth and greatness, and of how the hearts of the sad and suffering were cheered by his charities, and his ready sympathy. Have you forgotten how you used to open your heart to me, Davey? I have

not. You did not know, poor foolish boy—how should you, indeed?—that I had gone on a long and perilous journey to trace the history of—a lie! That I had visited Barbadoes, and there learnt—what I had been sure of in my own mind before—that no relative of Geoffrey Stirling's ever lived, or ever died, among the cane-tracks—that the rich so-called 'heritage' had been bought by a man who called himself Andrew Fairfax, but whose description answered, line by line, to that of Geoffrey Stirling—answered as the image in a glass answers to that of him who stands before it. You did not know that, a little later still, the 'heritage' was supposed to be sold again, to pass into other hands—the hands of Geoffrey Stirling? But you know now, Davey, that these things are true, for when your master died you hurried out to Barbadoes; you gained permission from Master Ralph to sell the estate and wind up all the affairs belonging to it; you schemed to keep things quiet, never to let your master's son know that the old Uncle Daniel of whom he spoke with such gentle and surprised gratitude had had no existence—save in Geoffrey Stirling's own crafty brain."

"If you knew these things to be so—if you suspected my father of so great a crime, why did you not accuse him openly?"

The voice that spoke was Ralph's, but if those who heard had not seen also, they would not have known it for his.

"Aye, aye," cried Davey, lifting his haggard eyes to Ralph's and clutching his hands the one in the other, "that's what I told her on that fearful night—that night of which you've heard but half the story yet—mine's still to tell. An open enemy may be an honest soul—but what a crawling, creeping, accursed thing is one who plays the Judas!"

"You are fools," said Hester, gathering about her shoulders the shawl which had fallen from them—"fools, both of you! If I had said my say, laid my heart bare, who would have been on my side—who would have lent a hand to help me prove the truth? If I had told of my husband's visit to this house, under whose roof we all now stand; if I had told of his peering in at that very window through which the moonlight now streams; if I had told of his angry threatening gestures as he fled the place, of his late wanderings the night before, of his telling me how he saw, himself unseen, a countryman—a man in a waggoner's frock and with a long red beard

—how he saw the shadow of the slouched hat and shrouded form melt among these very trees that rustle as we are speaking—who would have believed me? Was not my husband dead—dead—dead? Had he lived—what then? He was mad. The people called him ‘mad Gabriel!’ Who would have heeded what he said? They have said the same of me since,” she went on, a strange, troubled, wandering look coming over her face, her eyes glancing uneasily round; “and it may be that they say the truth; but I am not without a woman’s wit and cunning. No, no! I was foiled once, but I will not be foiled again—not I! ‘The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children.’ The sin of Geoffrey Stirling shall be visited heavily, heavily—‘good measure, pressed down, running over.’”

She cowered down in a low chair, muttering; glanced timorously out into the shadowy night; dragged her shawl close about her throat; turned, as if for warmth, to the hearth where no fire was. All her courage, all her daring, seemed to have died out for the moment, as the light of a lamp fades for lack of oil.

Fear held Hilda silent; a creeping horror was upon the other two. This mingling of strength and weakness, of wild declaiming and scared and fitful muttering, had something ghastly in it. It was a thing that those who saw and heard never forgot to their dying day.

Hilda, quitting her lover’s side (wholly without misgiving that he should misconstrue the action, so entire was her trust in the sympathy of thought and feeling that bound them the one to the other), knelt in sorrow and amaze beside her mother’s knee, cast tender arms about her shoulders, murmured in her ear fond words of soothing, turning now and again a look of piteous pleading to the others, as who would say, “Bear with her gently, bear with her yet a little while!”

For a time Hester endured, without returning, these caresses. It may be doubted, indeed, if she were conscious of them. Her dark brows were knit above her eyes, which seemed to look beyond the present, and rather to be reading the story of her own heart than taking note of actual things around her.

All at once she turned and looked at Hilda, stirred uneasily beneath the circlet of her arms, unlinked that loving girdle, and pushed the girl aside.

“Once when you were a child,” she said,

“I took your doll from you, and you cosseted me like that to get it back again; now it is your lover you are crying for—your lover, the son of your father’s murderer. I tell you my curse would be upon you, if you were Ralph Stirling’s wife! I would curse you, Hilda, though you are the child that I once bore beneath my heart. But there will be no need—no need; now that he knows, he will give you up, he will cast you aside, he will have done with you.”

She spoke the last few sentences hoarsely, drawing her breath heavily in between each. The strain and excitement were beginning to tell upon her fever-worn frame; yet in her eye was no relenting; in the pitiless set of her cruel mouth no sign of mercy. Vengeance, in “good measure, pressed down, running over,” should be poured upon the son of her enemy. She had been foiled once—she would be foiled no more.

“He will have done with you—he will accept the test that I have laid upon him to show what his love is worth——”

“He will not give her up—he will not cast her aside!” cried Ralph, beside himself, and straightway he held out his arms, and Hilda nestled to his heart, like a bird that flies to its nest at eventide, fearing the long dark hours of the night.

Over her fair head, clasping her close and fast, as though never more to let her go, Ralph cast back in Hester’s teeth the test that she had offered him.

“Listen,” he said, and his voice shook with passion; “though every word of this most foul and monstrous calumny against the dead were true—though my dearest father were indeed the robber and the murderer you dare to call him—I would not yield up this dear love of mine, unless her own lips bade me go; even then I would only so far give her up as to hope for nothing at her hands, still loving her, to live faithful to her, and to die still holding her my dearest treasure. It is surely well that you should know the strength of the dear bonds you fain would tear asunder, the closeness of the tie you have the will, nay, the power, to break—well you should know how closely Hilda’s life is linked with mine, and mine with hers—well you should realise what maimed and broken things those lives would be, parted the one from the other.”

“Maimed and broken!” she echoed, twining her hands about her knees.

“Maimed and broken! What has mine

been, and by whom? I tell you when I looked on my husband's dead face, gazed into the darkened eyes, that could never give me back one glance or look again, all the pity and the love in my nature died too. Since that night of terror I have lived for one thing only—vengeance. Once I thought I held it in my hand, but as my fingers closed upon it—it escaped me. I should be a fool to let it pass me twice—shouldn't I?"

She looked up sharply in his face, as she put the question to him, and there, in the eyes that were so like his father's, she saw the lustrous sheen of tears.

Something in that sight confused and troubled her.

She glanced at Davey, who was standing still as any statue, with his eyes fixed on Ralph, his arms folded across his chest. She knew this enforced quiet to be but the calm before the storm. She had broken the promise which had been wrung from her unwilling lips by David Robin upon the night of Geoffrey Stirling's death; a promise given in the presence of an awful though silent witness. She would have to pay the cost of her unfaithfulness. She had been willing to risk all to satiate the desire of vengeance in her heart. She had been willing to sink the ship, and sink with it.

But now, just for the moment, some strange misgivings came over her; a hungry sorrow gnawed at her heart; a haunting fear that had more than once beset her, one that she had cast aside, refusing to dwell upon its sad pathetic face and dim regretful eyes, came back clothed in new and vivid colours. Nor could she drive it forth. She had weakened and distorted the powers of her mind by years of morbid, maddening dwelling upon one absorbing train of thought. She had lost all self-control, all possibility of self-discipline. This step towards the mad-house had Hester Devenant taken long ago: her thoughts led her, she could not guide her thoughts. They were as wild, unmanageable steeds dragging her whither they would.

And now when she wanted to be clear and concise, when she aimed at setting his

father's sin clearly and cleverly before the eyes of Ralph Stirling, she could not tear her thoughts from the dear, sweet days of old, when Gabriel, her husband, loved her; nor could she hold them back from wandering on to the days when something very like the aching of a broken heart told her that that love was dead.

This brave young lover of Hilda's could weep—so mighty was the love he bore her—at the mere thought and fancy of her loss; while she, Hester Devenant, had but plucked the fair fruit of tenderness to see it fall from her hand, and lie down, trodden among those withered leaves, her dead and blighted hopes.

"I should have won him back in time," she said, speaking more as if to herself than to others. "I should have won him back if I had spoken soft and sweet to him as in the olden days. He would have turned to me again, I know he would. I was twice robbed—robbed of the present, and of the future that might have been. The devil has often taunted me with the thought that I wore out his love—that all his gentleness was only toleration—that he was silent when I rated at him, only because he did not care for what I said any longer—but I tell you I should have won him back in time; I should have done it—he had a sweet, forgiving nature, had Gabriel, but he was done to death—done to death—done to death——"

Those who listened in wonder, lacking the clue to her words, saw her smite her hands together in an anguish of despair and longing, and knew not what new madness might possess her.

Hilda, swaying from her lover's hold, bent down and gazed upon her mother's face with streaming, frightened eyes. In Ralph's shone the divine light of pity. Davey alone was stern and unmoved.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LV. MR. GREY'S REMORSE.

MR. GREY'S feeling as he returned home was chiefly one of self-reproach,—so that, though he persisted in not believing the story which had been told to him, he did in truth believe it. He believed at any rate in Mr. Scarborough. Mr. Scarborough had determined that the property should go hither and thither according to his will, without reference to the established laws of the land, and had carried and would carry his purpose. His object had been to save his estate from the hands of those harpies, the money-lenders, and as far as he was concerned he would have saved it. He had, in fact, forced the money-lenders to lend their money without interest and without security, and then to consent to accept their principal when it was offered to them. No one could say but that the deed when done was a good deed. But this man in doing it had driven his coach and horses through all the laws,—which were to Mr. Grey as Holy Writ; and in thus driving his coach and horses he had forced Mr. Grey to sit upon the box and hold the reins. Mr. Grey had thought himself to be a clever man,—at least a well-instructed man, but Mr. Scarborough had turned him round his finger, this way and that way, just as he had pleased.

Mr. Grey when in his rage he had given the lie to Mr. Scarborough had, no doubt, spoken as he had believed at that moment. To him the new story must have sounded like a lie, as he had been driven to accept the veritable lie as real truth. He had looked into all the circumstances of the marriage at Nice, and had accepted it. He had sent his partner over and had picked

up many incidental confirmations. That there had been a marriage at Nice between Mr. Scarborough and the mother of Augustus was certain. He had traced back Mr. Scarborough's movements before the marriage, and could not learn where the lady had joined him who afterwards became his wife. But it had become manifest to him that she had travelled with him, bearing his name. But in Vienna Mr. Barry had learned that Mr. Scarborough had called the lady by her maiden name. He might have learned that he had done so very often at other places; but it had all been done in preparation for the plot in hand,—as had scores of other little tricks which have not cropped up to the surface in this narrative. Mr. Scarborough's whole life had been passed in arranging tricks for the defeat of the law. And it had been his great glory so to arrange them as to make it impossible that the law should touch him. Mountjoy had declared that he had been defrauded. The creditors swore with many oaths that they had been horribly cheated by this man. Augustus no doubt would so swear very loudly. No man could swear more loudly than did Mr. Grey as he left the squire's chamber after this last revelation. But there was no one who could punish him. The money-lenders had no writing under his hand. Had Mountjoy been born without a marriage ceremony, it would have been very wicked, but the vengeance of the law would not have reached him. If you deceive your attorney with false facts he cannot bring you before the magistrates. Augustus had been the most injured of all; but a son, though he may bring an action against his father for bigamy, cannot summon him before any tribunal because he has married his mother twice over. These were Mr. Scarborough's

death-bed triumphs; but they were very sore upon Mr. Grey.

On his journey back to town, as he turned the facts over more coolly in his mind, he began to fear that he saw a glimmer of the truth. Before he reached London he almost thought that Mountjoy would be the heir. He had not brought a scrap of paper away with him, having absolutely refused to touch the documents offered to him. He certainly would not be employed again either by Mr. Scarborough or on behalf of his estate or his executors. He had threatened that he would take up the cudgels on behalf of Augustus, and had felt at the moment that he was bound to do so, because, as he had then thought, Augustus had the right cause. But as that idea crumbled away from him, Augustus and his affairs became more and more distasteful to him. After all, it ought to be wished that Mountjoy should become the elder son,—even Mountjoy, the incurable gambler. It was terrible to Mr. Grey that the old fixed arrangement should be unfixed, and certainly there was nothing in the character of Augustus to reconcile him to such a change.

But he was a very unhappy man when he put himself into a cab to be carried down to Fulham. How much better would it have been for him had he taken his daughter's advice, and persistently refused to make this last journey to Tretton! He would have to acknowledge to his daughter that Mr. Scarborough had altogether got the better of him, and his unhappiness would consist in the bitterness of that acknowledgment. But, when he reached the Manor House, his daughter met him with news of her own which for the moment kept his news in abeyance. "Oh, papa," she said, "I am so glad you've come." He had sent her a telegram to say that he was coming. "Just when I got your message I was frightened out of my life. Who do you think was here with me?"

"How am I to think, my dear?"

"Mr. Juniper."

"Who on earth is Mr. Juniper?" he asked. "Oh, I remember; Amelia's lover."

"Do you mean to say you forgot Mr. Juniper? I never shall forget him. What a horrid man he is."

"I never saw Mr. Juniper in my life. What did he want of you?"

"He says you have ruined him utterly. He came here about two o'clock, and found me at work in the garden. He made his way in through the open gate, and would

not be sent back though one of the girls told him that there was nobody at home. He had seen me, and I could not turn him out, of course."

"What did he say to you? Was he impudent?"

"He did not insult me, if you mean that, but he was impudent in not going away, and I could not get rid of him for an hour. He says that you have doubly ruined him."

"As how?"

"You would not let Amelia have the fortune that you promised her, and I think his object now was to get the fortune without the girl. And he said also that he had lent five hundred pounds to your Captain Scarborough."

"He is not my Captain Scarborough."

"And that when you were settling the captain's debts, his was the only one you would not pay in full."

"He is a rogue;—an arrant rogue."

"But he says that he's got the captain's name to the five hundred pounds; and he means to get it some of these days, now that the captain and his father are friends again. The long and the short of it is that he wants five hundred pounds by hook or by crook, and that he thinks you ought to let him have it."

"He'll get it, or the greater part of it. There's no doubt he'll get it if he has got the captain's name. If I remember right the captain did sign a note for him to that amount. And he'll get the money if he has stuck to it."

"Do you mean that Captain Scarborough would pay all his debts?"

"He will have to pay that one, because it was not included in the schedule. What do you think has turned up now?"

"Some other scheme?"

"It is all scheming;—base false scheming, to have been concerned with which will be a disgrace to my name for ever!"

"Oh, papa!"

"Yes; for ever. He has told me now, that Mountjoy is his true, legitimate, eldest son. He declares that that story, which I have believed for the last eight months, has been altogether false and made out of his own brain to suit his own purposes. In order to enable him to defraud these money-lenders he used a plot which he had concocted long since, and boldly declared Augustus to be his heir. He made me believe it, and because I believed it even those greedy grasping men, who would not have given up a tithe of their prey to save the whole family,

even they believed it too. Now, at the very point of death, he comes forward with perfect coolness, and tells me that the whole story was a plot made out of his own head."

"Do you believe him now?"

"I became very wrath, and said that it was a lie. I did think that it was a lie. I did flatter myself that in a matter concerning my own business, and in which I was bound to look after the welfare of others, he could not so have deceived me. But I find myself as a child—as a baby in his hands."

"Then you do believe him now?"

"I am afraid so. I will never see him again, if it be possible for me to avoid him. He has treated me as no one should have treated his enemy; let alone a faithful friend. He must have scoffed and scorned at me merely because I had faith in his word. Who could have thought of a man laying his plots so deeply,—arranging for twenty years past the frauds which he has now executed! For thirty years or nearly his mind has been busy on these schemes, and on others, no doubt, which he has not thought it necessary to execute, and has used me in them simply as a machine. It is impossible that I should forgive him."

"And what will be the end of it?" she asked.

"Who can say? But this is clear. He has utterly destroyed my character as a lawyer."

"No. Nothing of the kind."

"And it will be well if he have not done so as a man. Do you think that when people hear that these changes have been made with my assistance they will stop to unravel it all, and to see that I have been only a fool and not a knave? Can I explain under what stress of entreaty I went down there on this last occasion?"

"Papa, you were quite right to go. He was your old friend, and he was dying."

Even for this he was grateful. "Who will judge me as you do,—you who persuaded me that I should not have gone? See how the world will use my name. He has made me a party to each of his frauds. He disinherited Mountjoy and he forced me to believe the evidence he brought. Then when Mountjoy was nobody he half paid the creditors by means of my assistance."

"They got all they were entitled to get."

"No. Till the law had decided against them they were entitled to their bonds.

But they, ruffians though they are, had advanced so much hard money; and I was anxious that they should get their hard money back again. But unless Mountjoy had been illegitimate,—so as to be capable of inheriting nothing,—they would have been cheated; and they have been cheated. Will it be possible that I should make them or make others think that I have had nothing to do with it? And Augustus, who will be open-mouthed;—what will he say against me? In every turn and double of the man's crafty mind I shall be supposed to have turned and doubled with him. I do not mind telling the truth about myself to you."

"I should hope not."

"The light that has guided me through my professional life has been a love of the law. As far as my small powers have gone I have wished to preserve it intact. I am sure that the Law and Justice may be made to run on all fours. I have been so proud of my country as to make that the rule of my life. The chance has brought me into the position of having for a client a man the passion of whose life has been the very reverse. Who would not say that for any attorney to have such a man as Mr. Scarborough, of Tretton, for his client, was not a feather in his cap? But I have found him to be not only fraudulent but too clever for me. In opposition to myself he has carried me into his paths."

"He has never induced you to do anything that was wrong."

"'Nil conscire sibi.' That ought to be enough for a simple man. But it is not enough for me. It cannot be enough for a man who intends to act as an attorney for others. Others must know it as well as I myself. You know it. But can I remain an attorney for you only? There are some of whom just the other thing is known; but then they look for work of the other kind. I have never put up a shop-board for sharp practice. After this the sharpest kind of practice will be all that I shall seem to be fit for. It isn't the money. I can retire with enough for your wants and for mine. If I could retire amidst the good words of men I should be happy. But, even if I retire, men will say that I have filled my pockets with plunder from Tretton."

"That will never be said."

"Were I to publish an account of the whole affair,—which I am bound in honour not to do,—explaining it all from beginning to end, people would only say that I was

endeavouring to lay the whole weight of the guilt upon my confederate who was dead. Why did he pick me out for such usage—me who have been so true to him?"

There was something almost weak, almost feminine in the tone of Mr. Grey's complaints. But to Dolly they were neither feminine nor weak. To her, her father's grief was true and well-founded; but for herself in her own heart there was some joy to be drawn from it. How would it have been with her if the sharp practice had been his, and the success? What would have been her state of mind had she known her father to have conceived these base tricks? Or what would have been her condition had her father been of such a kind as to have taught her that the doing of such tricks should be indifferent to her? To have been high above them all,—for him and for her,—was not that everything? And was she not sure that the truth would come to light at last? And if not here, would not the truth come to light elsewhere where light would be of more avail than here? Such was the consolation with which Dolly consoled herself.

On the next two days Mr. Grey went to his chambers and returned without any new word as to Mr. Scarborough and his affairs. One day he did bring back some tidings as to Juniper. "Juniper has got into some row about a horse," he said, "and is I fear in prison. All the same he'll get his five hundred pounds; and if he knew that fact it would help him."

"I can't tell him, papa. I don't know where he lives."

"Perhaps Carroll could do so."

"I never speak to Mr. Carroll. And I would not willingly mention Juniper's name to my aunt or to either of the girls. It will be better to let Juniper go on in his row."

"With all my heart," said Mr. Grey. And then there was an end of that.

On the next morning, the fourth after his return from Tretton, Mr. Grey received a letter from Mountjoy Scarborough. "He was sure," he said, "that Mr. Grey would be sorry to hear that his father had been very weak since Mr. Grey had gone, and unable even to see him, Mountjoy, for more than two or three minutes at a time. He was afraid that all would soon be over; but he and everybody around the squire had been surprised to find how cheerful and high-spirited he was. It seems," wrote

Mountjoy, "as though he had nothing to regret either as regards this world or the next. He has no remorse, and certainly no fear. Nothing, I think, could make him angry, unless the word repentance were mentioned to him. To me and to his sister he is unwontedly affectionate; but Augustus's name has not crossed his lips since you left the house." Then he went on to the matter as to which his letter had been written. "What am I to do when all is over with him? It is natural that I should come to you for advice. I will promise nothing about myself, but I trust that I may not return to the gambling-table. If I have this property to manage, I may be able to remain down here without going up to London. But shall I have the property to manage? And what steps am I to take with the view of getting it? Of course I shall have to encounter opposition, but I do not think that you will be one of those to oppose me. I presume that I shall be left here in possession, and that they say is nine points of the law. In the usual way I ought, I presume, simply to do nothing, but merely to take possession. The double story about the two marriages ought to count for nothing. And I should be as though no such plot had ever been hatched. But they have been hatched and other people know of them. The creditors I presume can do nothing. You have all the bonds in your possession. They may curse and swear, but will, I imagine, have no power. I doubt whether they have a morsel of ground on which to raise a lawsuit; for whether I or Augustus be the eldest son, their claims have been satisfied in full. But I presume that Augustus will not sit quiet. What ought I to do in regard to him? As matters stand at present, he will not get a shilling. I fear my father is too ill to make another will. But at any rate he will make none in favour of Augustus. Pray tell me what I ought to do. And tell me whether you can send anyone down to assist me when my father shall have gone."

"I will meddle no farther with anything in which the name of Scarborough is concerned." Such had been Mr. Grey's first assertion when he received Mountjoy's letter. He would write to him, and tell him that after what had passed, there could be nothing of business transacted between him and his father's estate. Nor was he in the position to give any advice on the subjects mooted. He would wash

his hands of it altogether. But, as he went home, he thought over the matter, and told himself that it would be impossible for him thus to repudiate the name. He would undertake no lawsuit either on behalf of Augustus or of Mountjoy. But he must answer Mountjoy's letter, and tender him some advice.

During the long hours of the subsequent night he discussed the whole matter with his daughter. And the upshot of his discussion was this,—that he would withdraw his name from the business, and leave Mr. Barry to manage it. Mr. Barry might then act for either party as he pleased.

TRADES'-GUILDS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

IN THREE PARTS. PART II.

I STATED in my last article that in this paper I should devote myself to some remarks on the bazaars and markets of Constantinople, which are quite distinct in their characteristics from the shops. As a matter of course, bazaars are markets, or permanent fairs, in which dealers of all kinds congregate. In Constantinople the covered market is usually called a bazaar, and the open-air market is called a Tchartche; but this rule is by no means without exception, for the Egyptian bazaar which is situated behind the Mosque of Yeni Djami is called "Misr Tchartche," or the Egyptian Market, whilst the market, although it is held at Tophané in the open air every Tuesday, is called Sali Bazaar, or the Tuesday Bazaar.

There was in Constantinople, before the time of Justinian, a vast edifice with the form of which we are wholly unacquainted, but which contained an enormous number of shops of all kinds. This edifice, no matter what its form may have been, was evidently a Byzantine bazaar. It fell into ruins during the decadence of the Greek Empire, but it furnished a site for the great bazaar of modern Constantinople, which contains the Bezestein, so dear to tourists, and was built by the Turks after the Conquest. Any one who wanders through the arcades of this vast bazaar, or, rather, vast cluster of bazaars, must, for himself, come to the conclusion that they were built by a people who had lived in lands in which the exclusion of light and heated air was a condition of existence. Modern shopkeepers in this bazaar find that the exclusion of light has certainly collateral advantages which are

not to be despised. I do not propose to write of this bazaar, first, because every tourist who has visited it has forestalled me; secondly, because, though interesting, it is monotonous; thirdly, because it smacks too much of modern Leeds, Bradford, Manchester, and Glasgow to be useful for my present purpose.

The Egyptian bazaar, which hardly any one visits, is built on the site of the markets which belonged to the Genoese and Venetians, when they were prime favourites with the later Greek emperors. It is lofty, and well, though not exuberantly, lighted, and it is well paved. Its walls are enriched with a prodigious number of beautiful wood carvings, the history of which I have not been able to ascertain, and, as it is never crowded, it makes a pleasant lounge. One wing is given up to raw cotton, and in this wing it is not so well to lounge, unless the lounge be desirous to provide himself with a large stock of bronchitis. But the main body of the bazaar is charming. Dyes and pigments seem to guarantee us against another Deluge. The drugs which kill and those which heal, repose amicably side by side in such quantities, that if Cato had composed his famous soliloquy in the Egyptian Bazaar, he might with tenfold reason have said:

Thus am I doubly armed. My death and life;
My bane and antidote; are both before me.

All the roots, and seeds, and grains, and beans of the East and of the South are presented here in a dumb but eloquent parliament which needs no "new rules of procedure." A bibulous tourist may take his "cinnamon, ginger, allspice, and cloves," through the pores of his skin without any fear of adding an additional shade of scarlet to his nose. If "all the perfumes of Arabia" could have sweetened Lady Macbeth's "little hand," she might have found them in the Egyptian bazaar. And if—— But stop! a delicate and subtle cloud of pepper mingles with the motes in the sunbeams, which dart down from the upper windows, titillates the nose, and stimulates its owner to further exertion. Let me not linger here; 'tis too lovely for me! Farewell, oh, farewell!

The fish-market of Stamboul, which, by the way, is always called Baluk Bazaar—that is, the Fish Bazaar—is as badly arranged as Billingsgate was wont to be, but it is admirably stocked, and might be still better stocked if the arrangements for fishing in the Black Sea, the

Bosphorus, and the Marmora were improved; and if the destruction of fry were prevented. Many hundreds of tons of mackerel about two inches in length, and as many tons of red mullet about three inches in length, are annually brought to market. In spite of this, Constantinople is supplied with a great abundance and great variety of fish. An old resident, who is well acquainted with the markets, has recently catalogued and described twenty-three species of fish which are common to the Marmora and the Bosphorus, but, as to some of those species there are varieties, the total number of varieties coming to market exceeds seventy. Many of these species are excellent; for instance, the lobster, the John Dory, the red and grey mullet, the tunny, the turbot, the swordfish, and the mackerel. The gentleman who has taken the trouble thus to catalogue the fish, committed one slight error for which he was unmercifully laughed at. He inserted in his list of fish the edible snail, simply because he saw it in vast quantities in the fish-market. So also Sir Charles Fellows said, in 1838, that he had seen a dozen hampers of these snails, but he did not take them for fish. I have seen them often myself, and am certain that they are nothing but land snails such as are eaten in many parts of the Continent. In Constantinople, as in other places, they are thought to be good for consumptive patients. Hone, in his *Every Day Book*, speaks of the "palamedes" as much smaller than the tunny, but as having so much of the same nature, that some persons have supposed it to be only the young of that fish. If he were so, he would be a very well-grown child, for he is commonly nearly two feet in length. If you were to see the tunny and the palamedes side by side you would not take them for father and son. The palamedes is a distinct fish, and is, as Gibbon justly tells us, one of the most delicious fish in the Bosphorus. He passes his time in chasing the small mackerel and pilchards during their periodical trips between the Marmora and the Black Sea; and, whilst he is thus pleasantly engaged he is taken from the bank with a metal bait attached to a very long line.

There is a great deal of fishing from the shore in the Bosphorus. The houses come down close to the water's edge. The small fish, to avoid the palamedes, swim close along shore, and the crafty householder stands on the step of his back door, and

with a hand net extracts his dinner from the transparent stream. There are six varieties of mackerel in the Bosphorus; there are excellent oysters and prawns; and the dolphin and the porpoise are also brought to market. But of the large fish the swordfish is the king. His flesh, which is of a dullish red, is far superior to that of the sturgeon, which I used to eat at Greenwich and Blackwall, and which always tasted like poor veal. A cutlet of swordfish is by no means to be despised. The creature grows to a very great size. Two years ago I was in a caïque, near Beicos, on the Asiatic side of the Upper Bosphorus, where these creatures most abound, when a very large fish shot suddenly up from the water at about ten feet distant from the caïque. He exposed fully one half of his body, and his wet sword gleamed in the fierce sunlight like a polished spear. I trembled as I thought what must have happened if the beast had taken it into his head to come up immediately under the caïque. The sword, which is frequently more than three feet in length, is as tough as a shillelagh, and has a point like that of a bayonet.

Will it be believed that with this wealth of good fish the benighted natives actually eat octopods, which are imported dried from the Greek Islands? My gorge rises when I look at them. And can any member of the Fishmongers' Company tell me why mussels are not to be considered fish? The Greeks, who during their Lent may not eat fish, are allowed to eat mussels, and are told that mussels are not fish, wherefore special arrangements are made for trawling them during the Greek fasts, when vast quantities are taken. The snails to which I have alluded are not regarded as meat, and, therefore, may be eaten during the Catholic fasts.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the fish market and the Egyptian Bazaar, there is a large square, which is situated behind the Mosque of Yeni Djami, and in which—on Mondays—a large open-air market is held. This market is one of the most curious sights in the metropolis, and the dragoman, as he conducts his victims to St. Sophia, might easily conduct them through it. But he never does this; either because he does not think the market genteel, or because, in order to go through it, he would have to turn about five-and-twenty yards out of his way, and consume, perhaps, twenty minutes of his valuable time.

To this market there come the seal-cutters; for though a large number of people can write, the signature of all documents by seal is still obligatory, so that every one, no matter what his attainments, must have his name in Turkish, cut or engraved on stone or metal. There, too, come the public letter-writers, who, under the shelter of an imaret, or under the portico of the mosque, or, better still, in the hall of the adjacent Turkish post-office, indite the "soft intercourse" which Fatima or Leila desires to waft to Bagdad or to Cairo. There are the shops of the bird-catchers, hung within and without with cages of small birds, which the pious Turkish women purchase, in order that they may give them liberty—an act of benevolence which assuredly results, in many cases, in a second capture, and perhaps a second sale of the poor little creatures. There, too, congregate the makers of quilts, coats, cloaks, and large baggy trousers, who will measure you and fit you in the open air, and will undertake to clothe you in the course of the day. There, too, are the vendors of similar articles when they have come down in the world, and have descended to the last stage but one of frippery. Calicoes and printed goods from Manchester and Glasgow are to be found there; and gaudy scarves and sashes made after Turkish models, but bearing the trademark of English and Scotch firms, festoon the walls of the mosque. The dealers in old iron, in old tools of curious but useful patterns, in old swords and daggers, and guns and pistols, have their appointed stalls, and an inspection of their goods will repay the visitor for his trouble. There are secondhand bookstalls for those who understand Turkish, and there are the stalls of the herbalists for those who do not understand medicine.

Itinerant dentists and corn-cutters ply their vocation in the light of day, and loftier practitioners are open to consultation and a fee. There, too, the hungry visitor may dine, copiously and quickly, and with the conviction that everything which he eats will be wholesome, well cooked, and clean. He need not be ashamed of dining *al fresco*. No one will mind him. He may have a course of fish, broiled over charcoal before his eyes; he may have a course of kibabs, very good indeed and cooked in like manner; and he may have a small basin of yaourt (of which more anon) for five piastres, which are somewhat less than

tenpence, and if his "pugging tooth" makes him desiderate other luxuries than yaourt, he may have either of two kinds of caimak, both of which are made of cream. One is a kind of cheese-cake, but the other is the original cream-tart of the Arabian Nights. It is to be noted, however, that in spite of their close vicinity to the Egyptian Bazaar the makers of the cream-tarts put no pepper in them. If he be thirsty he can get deliciously cool water, or lemonade, and the coffee with which he "tops up" will be as good as any that he could get at the most expensive restaurant in Pera. A profusion of sweetmeats will be there to tempt him, and even if he desire to treat himself as "honest Davy" treated Justice Shallow's guests, with "pippins and cheese to come," those delicacies will be within his reach.

Before I quit this busy Monday market, which is a refined oriental combination of Rag Fair, Petticoat Lane, Ratcliff Highway, the New Cut, and Clare Market, I should like to make a few remarks about two favourite dishes of the Turks.

Amongst other delicacies of which all classes are fond is that which is called yaourt. It is a dish of the remotest antiquity. It is a preparation of milk, and certainly originated amongst the nomad tribes of Asia, who pressed, and continue to press, camels, mules, cows, sheep, and goats into the duty of providing the milk. It has now become a favourite dish throughout the East. Yaourt very much resembles a dish which was common in Devonshire in the days of my youth, and may still be common there for all I know. This was called junket, and was composed of milk curdled to the consistence of thick custard by means of rennet. Yaourt is said by some authors to be identical with the "butter" which the wife of Heber the Kenite presented to Sisera in a "lordly dish" just before she put him to death. There is another curious story respecting yaourt. It is said that when Bajazet was taken prisoner by Tamerlane he was invited on the first day of his capture to dine at his conqueror's table, where a large dish of yaourt was set before him. On seeing this he burst into tears. Tamerlane demanded to know the cause of his emotion, upon which Bajazet replied, "Many years ago a prophet of great sanctity foretold that I should be captured by you, and he added that yaourt would be the first dish that you would offer me."

The milk from which yaourt is prepared

is usually curdled with rennet, and it is said that care is taken to use only the rennet of a kid which has never fed on anything but its mother's milk. As a matter of course it can be, and is curdled, by a leaven of sour yaourt carefully preserved for the purpose. I take the following curious entry from Southey's *Commonplace Book*, but I have no means of verifying it, or of adding to it. He ascribes it to Pouquebille, whom he makes to say: "Jougourth is a sort of curdled milk, turned by heating the milk over the fire with some of the old jougourth in it, or for want of that, the flower of an artichoke. Thus the original fermentation proceeds from this plant, and this the Greeks know perfectly well, resorting to it always when their stock of curd is entirely exhausted." I presume that the artichoke alluded to is the real and not the Jerusalem artichoke, but I have not been able to find any confirmation of the idea.

There is another dish, or rather a decoction, which is a great favourite with the working-classes. This is called "salep," and is made from the tubers of a particular species of orchid, which is cultivated for the purpose. Large quantities of it are consumed in Constantinople, chiefly in the early morning, and late at night. During the first half of the present century it used to be known in London under the name of "saloop," and I myself have often seen it at the early breakfast stalls as I wended my way to my office. It renders the same service to the working-classes here as it did then. I am told that it is also popular in America, but it assuredly is not popular with me, because the salep vendors perambulate the streets from four a.m. to seven a.m., and with stentorian lungs announce the advent of the precious drink.

I pass now from the markets to the open streets, and here again I pick up the thread of the resemblances between modern Constantinople and old London. The shoeblack is engendered by the mud of great cities, and a hot-bed, similar to that which produced him in old London, has brought him to life in Constantinople. He adds to the nigrity of the sweep, the impudence of the gamin or street arab. His creed is that men cannot be saved unless they have their boots blacked at least five times a day, and he preaches this doctrine in season and out of season. When he has a stationary pitch he beats a perpetual tattoo on his tripod with his brushes, crying all the while,

"Lustradji!" He will throw himself and his tripod in your way if you are in a hurry, and he will even take a passage in the steamboat, and piteously implore the passengers to take heed to their feet. He is amusing though very inconvenient. But in the present condition of the streets of Constantinople he is an absolute necessity. Sedan-chairs, too, we have in great numbers of the precise pattern known to Swift and Gay; and, indeed, without their aid many houses would be inaccessible except on foot. The chairmen are a turbulent and quarrelsome body and belabour each other with their poles much after the manner of the Irish chairmen at Bath. I have known them set a lady of goodly proportions down in the snow because they thought she was too heavy. Fortunately she was "diplomatic," and her cavass pursued the truant chairmen with his drawn sword and brought them back to their duty. It is a fact, moreover, that an ambassador on his way from Stamboul in a sedan-chair to a ball at another embassy in Pera had a difficulty with his chairmen, who ran away and left him, whereupon his excellency gallantly mounted on the back of a hamal and rode "pick-a-back" to the ball.

The arabadjis (cab-drivers) are not so turbulent, but they are terribly awkward. If you hail one, he does not come to where you are standing, but halts and waits for you to come to him. When he has carried you to your destination, he does not set you down by the foot pavement, but drops you in the middle of the road, and leaves you to wade through the mud. He is naturally a very bad whip, and his manner of driving is peculiar. Even when the street is wide enough to admit of two carriages abreast he selects the middle of it for his course, and drives along furiously, shouting loudly, "Guarda! guarda!" The result is that when arabadji meets arabadji there comes a "tug of war," and "a cry that shivers to the tingling stars." I am old enough to remember that the jarvies of London fifty years ago had the same amiable way of doing things. They were not, nor are the arabadjis, more civilised than their horses. There is no rule of the road in Constantinople, or if there be there is no one with power or will to enforce it.

The hamals, or porters, are much more civilised, and are really indispensable to householders. It is popularly said that a hamal can carry four times as much

as a man can lift on to his shoulders, or, to put it differently, as much as four men can put on his shoulders. It is my belief that a hamal can carry anything that can be lifted on to him, by a crane or other machinery. He makes his body into a zygomatic arch, and he takes on the crown of the arch any weight that you may place upon him. I have seen him carrying a swordfish ten feet in length, which he had poised in such a manner that the beast's sword stretched out beyond the hamal's head, and looked like the lance of a knight in the rest. I have seen him carrying a living and very large ram. The ram's huge woolly head and curled horns were exactly where the hamal's head would have been if he had been standing upright. But in spite of his great strength, he is an undoubted obstacle to street traffic. The streets in Pera and Stamboul are, for the most part, very narrow, and it pleases the hamal, if he be ordered to carry a packing-case of eight feet in length, to place it on his shoulders at right angles to the sides of the street. Bound down as he is he cannot see where he is going, so he keeps very steadily on, simply crying "Guarda! guarda!" as he goes. I once saw a hamal carrying a pony-carriage, which was snugly encased in an empty puncheon, and I was once the possessor of a very solid pedestal desk, seven feet in length, by four in depth, and three in width, which, when I first made its acquaintance, was on the back of a hamal, who was taking it over from the factory in Stamboul to my office in Galata. The hamal is not only very strong, he is very honest. They are almost entirely Armenians, and the head man of their guild keeps a careful watch over them, and takes care that they do not misappropriate the many valuable articles which are entrusted to their charge. Personally, I can speak well of their honesty, but I must admit that, as they come swinging along the streets, utterly unable to see their way, they are almost as bad as a charge from the Macedonian Phalanx, or the Scots Greys.

Under these circumstances it is not wonderful that the endeavour to "take the wall," which caused so many quarrels, some of which were attended by bloodshed, during the early part of the eighteenth century, should also prevail, though with less disastrous results, in Constantinople. Said Dr. Johnson, "When my mother lived in London in the last age (i.e. the

seventeenth century) there were two sets of people: those who gave and those who took the wall; the peaceable and the quarrelsome. When I returned to Lichfield, in 1737, after having been in London, my mother asked me whether I was one of those who gave the wall, or one of those who took it. Now it is fixed that every man keeps to the right; or if one is taking the wall another takes it and it is never a dispute."

In Constantinople every one tries to take the wall, and for the reasons which gave rise to the practice in England. The foot-pavement, where there is one, is very narrow, and the roadway—if an upheaval of the oolitic system can be called a roadway—is very muddy, and the struggle for dry ground is but natural.

I pause here to note that the readers of Hone's Every Day Book will find in the streets of Constantinople and the Banliene, the exact presentments of some of the illustrations to his work. The huckster; the pedlar; the knot, on which the hamals poise their heavy loads; and the wooden clog, which is used to keep ill-shod or well-shod feet out of the mud, all appear in Constantinople precisely as they are figured by Hone. The resemblance between old London and Constantinople follows us even into the night. Pope writes of

The drowsy watchman, who but gives a knock,
And breaks our rest to tell us what's o'clock.

Now this is precisely what the Turkish watchman (Bekdji) does, for at various periods of the night he raps out with his iron-shod staff the number of hours which have passed since sunset, when the Turkish diurnal reckoning begins.

But it is now time for me to treat of some of the customs which Constantinople has retained long after London has given them up. This must be reserved for another number.

THE ROSE.

VERY close to death he lay,
The keen eyes were waxing dim,
And he heard the whisperers say:
"Time grows very short for him;"
And the far-famed healer knew,
No hand that waning light could trim.
There was nothing left to do;
Yet, a want was in his eyes;
Love has instincts quick and true.
One who loved him saw it rise,
That last yearning—forth she went,
Calm in solemn sympathies.
O'er the red rose bed she bent,
The roses that he loved the best,
For their charm of hue and scent.

She chose the fairest from the rest,
 Plucked it very tenderly,
 Laid it on the sick man's breast.
 The deft hand hung uselessly ;
 The voice would never speak again,
 But she read the grateful eyes,
 And knew her guess was not in vain ;
 For a moment satisfied
 Was the look ; then, slowly, pain,
 Baffled longing, human pride,
 Thoughts of sweet lost hopeful years,
 Blent with power that struggling died ;
 Mocking doubts, and lurking fears,
 In the labouring bosom woke,
 And the sudden rush of tears
 As the silent spirit spoke,
 Drowning all the paling face,
 In a passionate torrent broke.
 There was silence in the place,
 Quiet lay the unconscious flower,
 And God took him to His grace,
 Our God, who reads the dying hour.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO VIII. OUR BARONET.

REFERENCE has been made several times in these papers to Sir Thomas Kedgbury, Bart., of The Latimers, and considering that he was undoubtedly our big man, it is to be feared that there has been some breach of the proprieties in keeping him so long in the background, while divers humble personalities of our little world of Shillingbury have been dealt with. For any such breach I feel I can find no better apology than to plead a preference to relate such things as I may have gathered from personal observation rather than those which I know only by common report. The Father of History, I believe, made a similar division of his facts ; but he shows no predilection for one sort over the other. If anything, he seems to chat more cheerily over what was told him by a priest in Egypt than concerning those things which he saw for himself. Perhaps I may be allowed to have my own way and pursue the opposite course, seeing that I do not claim a place for my sketches in the world of literature equal to that occupied by the History of Herodotus.

Hitherto I have kept mainly to the middle line of society, and have spoken for the most part of things within my own recollection and of people in my own walk of life. Mr. Northborough is no longer Rector of Shillingbury, so I make this last observation without fear. But in dealing with Sir Thomas Kedgbury, a real baronet, I must quit for a while the paths of experience.

I knew Sir Thomas very well to speak

to, as dozens of people in Shillingbury did likewise—indeed, it would have been hard to find anywhere a more affable country gentleman than he was ; for when he would ride into the town on his old roan cob, he would often spend half an hour in travelling from the bridge, where the town proper began, to The Black Bull, where he would stable his nag. He would have a word for everybody, and at John Tawner's, for instance, he would generally halt at the shop-door and have a good many words with honest John concerning such topics as the weather, the crops, the general news of the town, and, if an election should be approaching, the political outlook. Many a time, too, he has had a long gossip with me ; but now that I set to work to write about him, I find my knowledge of him does not seem to warrant my speaking of him as freely as I have spoken of Walter Tafnell or Dr. Goldingham. I must certainly rely more than I have hitherto done on oral tradition, and perhaps I may be more strongly influenced than I like to admit by that true-Briton inborn reverence for rank—there is a shorter name for it—and shrink from talking about a baronet as if he were a mere common person.

And indeed Sir Thomas, as baronets go, was not exactly a common person. He was by no means a mere squire, that is, a Squire Western, with the raw material of the eighteenth century covered with a thin coating of nineteenth-century varnish, a product of the present age, in which the vices of the past century are disguised and diluted rather than eradicated. Sir Thomas had taken high honours at Cambridge. He was a scholar and a student of both ancient and modern literature, speaking French and German with a fluency which in those days was very rare for a man in his position, and he knew much of the manners and cities of other lands.

Sir Thomas passed for a very learned man in Shillingbury, and he certainly did know something about a great many books. He had a way of airing his knowledge which I do not think he would have assumed had he not been confident that he was speaking to unlettered folk. He would occasionally talk of Papinian, and Bracton, and Fleta, while giving judgment as chairman of petty sessions, and once, I remember, at a prize presentation at the free school he rather puzzled some country divines by alluding to certain classic poets,

whom he described as Flaccus and Maro. But these were harmless foibles. There would be little cause for any outcry against the country gentlemen if they were all up to the standard of our baronet.

When I first remember Sir Thomas, he was Mr. Kedgbury, a good-looking young man of thirty, or thereabouts. He was supposed to be studying for the bar in London, but he spent much of his time at The Latimers. This was in the lifetime of his grandfather, old Sir David. Sir David had but two children—Thomas, who was killed fighting in India, and Letitia, Miss Kedgbury, who now kept house at The Latimers. Thomas had left a widow and one child, a boy, and, when the mother died about four years after her husband, the young heir was taken at once to The Latimers to be brought up by his aunt and grandfather.

Sir David was a rabid Tory of the old school, and when the time came to take some steps for the education of his grandson, his first care was to see that the boy was taught all those things which an English gentleman ought to know, and kept clear of all those poisonous ideas which had crept in from France and elsewhere since the overthrow of the altar, the throne, and the Bastille in that unhappy land. Sir David himself had been trained at Eton and Cambridge, and naturally thinking that no education could be more complete and no opinions more righteous than were his own, he proposed to submit his grandson to a similar curriculum.

Dr. Bellerby, one of his oldest friends, and the principal of Carfax College, Oxford, strongly advised him to vary the treatment a little by making it Eton and Oxford, assuring Sir David that there was no Toryism like that which flourished on the banks of the Isis; but Sir David was a man who loved not compromise, and stuck to his own view. Tom was first sent to a preparatory school, then to Eton, and finally, after a rather distinguished career at the latter place, he went up to Trinity. Sir David had heard many stories about the wild ways of Cambridge students in these times, and he had in truth prepared both his patience and the balance at his bankers to stand a little extra strain in consequence of a possible rake's progress; but, as it turned out, all his forethought on this score was quite superfluous. Tom settled down into a hard reading man, and would spend more than half the day during his vacations over books, the very names of

which conveyed no meaning to his grandfather's perceptions. It is probable the old gentleman was just a little disappointed that Tom was not a trifle less steady. He would have had no objection to hear something about midnight proctorial adventures, of knockers wrenched off, and Scotchmen abducted from tobacconists' shop doors. Lots of the very tip-top men had done these things in the hot blood of youth, and had been none the worse for it. Sir David had a notion, that, after all, Cambridge University had been founded to turn out English gentlemen, and not mere book-worms.

"You should ride more, Tom," he said one day; "all the best men used to ride to hounds a little, some of 'em a good deal in my time; and as to Newmarket, though I suppose the proctors wouldn't like it, yet hang it, Tom, you meet gentlemen there, though, perhaps, a few roughs as well, and I take it you have to rub shoulders sometimes with men in the lecture-rooms who aren't first cut. See a little more life, Tom, and remember that Cambridge is a school of manners as well as a seat of learning; at least, it used to be so in my time. Live in a good set, sir, and as to money, I've never stinted you yet, sir, have I?"

Tom thanked his grandfather heartily, not without a quiet smile which had just a little of satire in it, and went back to Trinity. Whether he did go in for hunting in pink, or lost a wager now and then on the heath, or entertained his friends more freely than heretofore, there is no evidence to show, but it was certain that he took Sir David's counsel seriously, and spent nearly as much again the next term as ever he had spent before. Still the old gentleman made no complaints about the money. He was, however, a little dissatisfied; he could not find out that Tom was hand in glove with any of the "tufts" who were then in residence. Sir David knew that Lord Flynders was up, and Sir George Dumbuck. Tom had been at Eton with both of these, and the old baronet would have been glad to hear of his grandson spending more time with them and less with his books. Sir David had not much affected books in his Cambridge days, and he was not disposed to rate them very highly as instruments of education.

The old man, however, did not worry himself about his grandson's strange perversity of taste. The boy would come to see what was due to his position before

long, no doubt, Sir David said to himself; but one unfortunate evening something occurred which did make him seriously uneasy, and made him doubt whether Tom was not already tainted with heresy, social and political alike. There was a large dinner-party at The Latimers, made up of the neighbouring gentry and clergy, invited to meet Tom who was only down for a few days at Christmas. One of the county members was there—the other was a very old man who had given out his intention of resigning almost directly—and Sir David had intended to make this dinner a sort of informal introduction of his grandson into the political society of the county, the first step towards securing for him the reversion of the county seat now soon to be vacated. All through the dinner the conversation had run upon political topics, but Tom had shirked the discussion as much as possible, and when he had been absolutely compelled to speak he had talked in a guarded, hesitating tone, which had not been at all pleasant to Sir David; but this negative offence of Tom's was not destined to be his worst crime that evening.

The country was just beginning to recover from the long torpor into which it had sunk under Lord Liverpool's administration. Canning it is true was dead, and the heavy hand of the Iron Duke once more held the reins; but still there was much talk about reform at home and revolt abroad. On these topics there was no uncertain utterance that evening at Sir David's table. All sang in the same strain, and there could not have been greater surprise had a thunderbolt fallen in their midst, than there was when Tom broke out into a passionate eulogium of Mr. Canning and his policy in reply to some brutal remarks of a red-faced squire, who had claimed Providence as a visible ally in removing such a man at once from a position where he might have brought the country to ruin. Nowadays we have forgotten how high were the hopes which the more enthusiastic spirits of fifty years ago cherished when Canning at last held the reins of power, and how bitter was their disappointment at his untimely death. At school Tom had learnt to feel an enthusiastic reverence for the man who was making famous the name of Eton, and he found amongst the set of men to whom he attached himself at Trinity—men of a type very different to that of Lord Flynders and Sir George Dumbuck—that Canning's generous advocacy of oppressed races and

nationalities had raised up a passionate attachment both to the statesman and to his opinions. He went with his associates heart and soul, but he knew well enough that it would be a hopeless task to try to make his grandfather think anything but evil of a man who had trodden under foot the traditions of Castlereagh, so he held his peace on the subject of politics as well as he could, and was only provoked to let the cat out of the bag by the speech of the narrow-minded boor who had just spoken, and perhaps by one glass more of champagne than usual.

Of Tom's hasty speech no great notice was taken. The guests as a rule were too much dumbfounded to utter a word. The county member replied with some good-humoured banter, saying that he supposed he should find Tom opposing him as the Radical candidate at the next election; and there was a black frown on Sir David's brow which sat there till the last guest had departed. His favourite ambition, to see his grandson the Tory member for the county, was shattered. He gave Tom no good-night greeting that night, and for the rest of the vacation he made himself as agreeable as an old gentleman naturally would under such circumstances.

And now it must be revealed that, since he had been at Cambridge, Master Tom had not confined himself wholly to platonic flirtation with the cause of oppressed nationalities. He had given his moral support to populations in revolt against their rulers, both in the old world and in the new; but his patronage of the descendants of Miltiades and Themistocles had been of a more practical nature. There was a Greek fever in England in those days, fully as violent and infectious as other maladies of a like character which have fallen upon us in more recent times; and many enthusiastic young gentlemen, nurtured on the culture of Hellas, were possessed with the conviction that a nation which had produced Solon two thousand years and more ago, must at least be able to make laws for itself by this time. Young men of this sort at Cambridge naturally read Byron, and followed his lead as a political teacher. Of course there was a local Greek committee with a noble president, and a long list of illustrious names to follow; a paid secretary and treasurer; and last, but not least, a subscription-list. The painful truth must now be told that to this subscription-list went

all that extra allowance of Sir David's, which he had fondly hoped might be spent at Newmarket, or in job-master's bills, or in dog-fighting, badger-baiting, or tavern boozing with Lord Flynders and Sir George Dumbuck.

By the light of Tom's hasty utterance at the dinner-table Sir David was able to read plainly many things which had hitherto been obscure—Tom's unwillingness to commit himself to any definite confession of the right creed in politics; the discovery of a number of *The Edinburgh Review* on the library-table; his disinclination to enter heartily into those sports and pastimes which had made English gentlemen what they were; and his craze for getting a high place in the tripos just as if he had been a Johnian sizar. "And what the deuce has he done with all that money?" said Sir David to himself. "Dick Lister tells me he can't spend above two hundred a year." Dick Lister was the son of a neighbouring rector, and was also at Trinity. This momentous question troubled Sir David not a little; and before Tom went back to Cambridge he brought the whole matter on the carpet. What the devil did he mean by coming there with his Radical rubbish, blurting out opinions such as no English gentleman ought to hold? And what had become of all that money he had spent in the last two years, if it was true that he lived with a lot of fellows who moped all day long over books, and never showed his face with men of his own rank?

Tom answered with some firmness of manner, but with perfect courtesy, that his political opinions were those which he had seen fit to adopt after testing them by the reasoning faculties with which he had been endowed by Providence; that he had never made mention of them in his grandfather's presence, fearing they might be obnoxious, till he was provoked into speech by the remarks of the red-faced gentleman; that as for the money, it had been given to him to spend unconditionally, and he had chosen to spend it in assisting the Greeks to recover their independence.

There was a terrible scene after this. The old man was furious. Miss Kedgbury did her best to heal the breach, but all in vain, and Tom went back to Cambridge with not exactly blessings on his head from his affronted grandfather. Soon after this the Mathematical Tripos list came out, and Kedgbury, Trinity, appeared as thirteenth wrangler. Sir David manifested no sign

of approval when his daughter read over the names. He considered that such rewards were all very well for men who had to work for their living, but were altogether beneath the notice of a gentleman. The cup of his sorrow, however, was not yet full. About a month after Tom had taken his degree there came a letter from him, saying that after what had passed between him and his grandfather with regard to the manner in which he had spent his allowance, he had not drawn anything during the past term, and should not require to do so for the future, as he had accepted the post of assistant mathematical master in a grammar-school in the Midland counties.

It was more than a week before the old man could bring himself to show the letter to Miss Kedgbury, and when he at last did so, there was on his face a look of hopeless misery, which showed that he was at last broken down. The thought that his grandson, the heir to his title and estate, the boy he really loved after all, should be sitting at a pedagogue's desk, teaching the first four rules of arithmetic to a pack of dirty schoolboys, heaped a burthen of shame and sorrow on his head, which he felt was too heavy for him to bear. It was crushing him to death, and must be shaken off at any cost, even at the cost of absolute surrender. His pet plan, the scheme he had nursed so carefully, had come to naught. The seat in Parliament for the county, which Tom might have had by stretching out his hand for it, had fallen to the lot of a certain Mr. Samuel Pycroft; and, though there was no fault to be found with Mr. Pycroft's Toryism, the elevation of a man of his family and antecedents to the dignity of a county member was in itself a bitter pill, and a sign of the times as well, to Sir David.

Mr. Pycroft was a retired Liverpool merchant, who had bought a large property in the county. In the days of which I am writing, the country was afflicted by an attack of agricultural depression quite as severe as anything of the kind that we have heard of lately, and there was very little spare cash amongst the landlords to spend on election matters. Men who had made fortunes in trade were in these days for the most part to be found in the camp of the enemy; so the Tories of our county thought it a fine windfall when a great Liverpool merchant with a great fortune settled down in their midst with a political creed of the right sort.

When the vacancy in the county representation occurred, in default of a candidate amongst the old families, Mr. Pycroft came forward, and was returned unopposed. After things had so far miscarried, Sir David became almost careless how much farther they went, provided the family honour were kept intact, and he did feel that a smirch on the escutcheon was a contingency not improbable in case they should not be able to persuade Tom to abandon the anomalous line of life which he had adopted. Sir David was half afraid, half ashamed, to take up the business himself, and he gladly entrusted the mission to Miss Kedgbury.

Miss Letitia Kedgbury was not without a certain sympathy for the errors of the prodigal whom she was commissioned to bid return, and she was therefore a far better envoy than Sir David would have been at his best. She was now hard upon "forty year." Years ago she had had her one love-affair, and its course had not run smooth; so she had settled down to keep house for her father as long as he should live, or till Tom should bring home a wife. There had been no need for her to remain a spinster, for she was a well-favoured, amiable woman, and was, moreover, endowed with thirty thousand pounds in her own right, which had come to her from her mother's fortune; but the right man did not come a second time, and it was pretty generally understood by this time that she intended to live and die as Miss Kedgbury. Miss Kedgbury knew the value of a quiet life, and she very wisely made it a leading principle never to cross or contradict her father in any matter connected with politics. But though she would listen patiently by the hour together to Sir David's vituperations of the present state of affairs, and his lamentations over the good times when the Six Acts were in force—when Castlereagh used to take sedition-mongers (Reformers they called themselves) by the throat and let them work out their theories of political regeneration within the walls of a felon's cell; and when Judge Braxfield was sending disaffected Scotch rascals to prison by dozens at a time—Miss Kedgbury had private opinions of her own which the old gentleman would have called flat rebellion had he ever caught scent of them. Miss Letitia took the bold course of letting Tom into her confidence and informing him that he was not the only political heretic in the family. She pointed out that any show of resentment on his

part was neither reasonable nor in good taste. Provided he kept his opinions quiet, as she kept hers, there would be no danger of further collision.

So, after a little demur, Tom agreed to accept the allowance his grandfather proposed to make, to resign his tutorial appointment, and to begin to eat his terms at the Temple, with a proviso that he should spend as much of his time as he could spare at The Latimera. He was indeed a little tired of teaching compound multiplication by this time, and fancied that he had made a sufficient demonstration of independence, by letting Sir David see that he could earn his own bread, and was ready, moreover, to do so, rather than stoop to compromise in the very lightest of his principles.

So the storm passed by, and Mr. Thomas Kedgbury was finally installed in the position of heir-apparent. He had not to wait long for his inheritance. A few months after he was called to the bar, Sir David was gathered to his fathers. The allowance which the old man had given to his nephew had been a very liberal one, so the latter had no reason to feel anything of that improper satisfaction, which is said sometimes to come to heirs-apparent when the term of expectancy is at an end. The new baronet, when he first heard of his exaltation, was by no means sure that the time might not come when he would sigh for the days when he was plain Mr. Kedgbury of the Inner Temple. It would be nice to rule the roast, no doubt; but the toils and troubles which beset those people who have to "take a position," made him rather uneasy. He felt, at present, no appetite for county business, or for dispensing unpaid justice from the Shillingbury bench. He did not anticipate much pleasure from the society of his neighbours, for he had not forgotten the red-faced gentleman and that fateful dinner, which had been given in his honour, but which had come within an inch of witnessing his disgrace. Then the rush, and the stir, and the strenuousness of life in the great city had become very fascinating to him. Nearly all the best men of his year were in London, full of high hopes of success in law and politics, and he could not but feel that settling down for life at The Latimers—albeit it was as pleasant a country house as one could find in a day's journey—would be something like premature interment.

But there was no help for it. It would

never do for a baronet, with a landed estate, to go into practice as if he were a common mortal. He gave a farewell dinner to a dozen or so of his more intimate friends at The Mitre, the night before he finally left town, and a very merry party it was; but as he retired to rest that night to a bedroom, at which the butler of The Latimers would certainly have turned up his nose, he could not help heaving a sigh at the advent of his greatness. How would the people he would have to foregather with for the future, compare with the set of men he had just left? He did not trouble to answer the question. He woke the next morning with a slight headache, and then, with a heavy heart, he set forth to take upon himself the honours and responsibilities of his new position.

"HOMELESS, RAGGED, AND TORN."

It is hard to know exactly how to come upon St. Luke's, E.C. It is hard to know—with all the spare light of a January day just waned out and a cold haze oozing down to slushy pavements—where exactly, now that St. Luke's is here, to find an Old Street cleaving it into halves. It is even harder to know—the dull haze getting duller and the slushy pavements having still more slushiness—at which point to pass from Old Street, now it has been reached, eastwise again to yet another unfamiliar line of dwelling-places, historic though its name may be—Bunhill Row. For footways are narrow here, and, as it were, interminable, and lead off down courts that are narrower still, and cannot surely be the spot required. The gas-lights betray squalor and slinking figures; gaslights glare out at times upon nauseous, ill-smelling fish, upon smeared sweets and chalk-white cakery; and the natural impulse is to get away from all this accumulation of nastiness. Burial-grounds swell out the hazy space, too—closed now, of course, but showing sinking slabs and soddened paths to make more mist and gloom and more dismalness to add to the uncertainty. Yet, being on the quest for a blessed asylum for the wretches who are houseless—being on the quest for the shelter where the piteous weeds of humanity may flock who have slouched and crouched in the streets all day, who have sought for poor work and found none, who have offered paltry wares for sale and had everybody turn away—

there is no shirking close acquaintanceship with any item of the localities that have been named. There is no shirking close acquaintanceship, further, with an obscure Banner Street, lying hidden somewhere near about, since this merciful sleeping-place for these poor vagabond outcasts is in this same Banner Street, and since, now the finding of this has been determined on, it has to be done, hard as it may be.

At last it is here, this Banner Street! Upon the kerb, in the gutter, in the mud, in the mist, in the cold, there is a solid straight block of human wretches. There, in a compact oblong mass, they stand waiting in absolute abject military order for their poor, sad, pitiable turn! Upon the kerb, in the gutter, in the mud, in the mist and the cold, here is a straight thick stretch of wretched fellow-creatures, spreading thirty or forty in length, four or five deep—meek, humble, downcast, silent; patiently waiting, quenched and quelled, for a constable to give the sign that one by one may leave the ranks and enter in.

Had these poor, faint, homeless, and hopeless souls clamoured; had they stormed; had they been full of blasphemy, or ribaldry, or revolutionary reproach, there would not have seemed such terrible pity in it. Had they hung to one another in groups; had they been scattered, or desultorily arriving; had they been in families; in clusters of companions or friends; had they given out murmurs, or rough gesture, or had they rushed, or demanded, or besieged, it would not have struck with such deep force. But to see them ranged in that meek, dumb, regulated line, to see them will-less, speechless—to see them, with shivering flesh, with desolate hearts—in such dejection, such submission, such abasement, in that was the shock, was the touching unexpectedness.

And there were six hundred and fifty of these, flocking to this one Banner Street, winter-night after winter-night! There were six hundred and fifty, some of them men, some of them women, some of them children and little flushed-cheeked babies! falling in line as each bitter winter day shrouded itself in dusk, and not one with a home, not one with any hope, or phantom of hope, of home or house-top, under this high sky, in this rich city, on this fair earth!

Then remember that these poor faint and sinking souls have shivered, and cowered

through the day; shrunk from by all. They have had no food; or, at the best, only garbage. They have had no seat, except the stones; no shelter. They have slunk, and they have shuffled, and they have stood semi-stupefied, in the rush, and the roar, and in the riches and the entire regardlessness of the crowded prosperous streets. And now, with the day only a little over five o'clock; with the day at that blest part of it when most are looking for the laying down of labour, for the fellowship of a fireside, for rest and revival and delicious reverie; they come, these six hundred and fifty, to stand on that kerb, in that gutter, dumb; aye, dumb as driven cattle. They toil up, these six hundred and fifty, to this for their haven—their heaven, if that is thought a better term—they are grateful to have had this to look forward to; to have had this to long for; to have, by blessed charity, this for a roof, and these for walls, saving them from a night passed as they have passed their day—giving them an interval, a respite, before the dawn obliges them to go out into the streets, to begin another day again!

And what shelter—for let it be looked at now—is there for these pitiable souls, now that they have been beckoned in? Where do they pass to, now they have filtered in from the streets, and the dusk, and the foggy air?

It is along these clean passages; it is up these clean stairs. It is away from this ground-floor here. Past it. Beyond it. Past these bare white landing-walls. Past more. And then—a thick door is opened, and it is—there!

On the floor. On thin black waterproof squabs. Under thin black waterproof skins.

Yes, it is on the floor. It is flat, supine, so that all can be seen at the same heart-rending sweep; it is on mere slices, or flakes, of squabs, stuffed with cut coir; under mere tarpaulins of skins, shiny, leather-like, each drawn round each, close and tight. Yes, looking down low, on the floor, there they are in lines and lines; head there, feet here—head there, feet here; stretched, severed, kept distinct and apart by dull, bare, narrow wooden slides or partitions, like trays, like graves, like troughs, like regulated divisions, close and straight together, for showing separate wares. And each poor pitiable figure, lying there, in that poor gloom, with no grace of rest left, with no picturesqueness of sleep, or of the preparation for it, with no tenderness of attitude or association, each poor pitiable figure

ranged there is—a woman! nothing but that mere semblance left to mark her, all else beaten and blotted away!

It seems to turn the soul. It seems to bring no belief in it, but dead awe. It seems that there can be no strength in blood ties and nationality! That there is no truth in the broad brotherhood of humanity; in fellowship as fellowship, in equality as equality! That there can be no compulsion, that there has never been the announcement of a compulsion, to hold hands out to the helpless and the fallen, to deal out comfort to those to whom comfort is a sore and instant need!

Ah, but stay. There is strength where there should be strength, and truth is truth, or there would not be this before the eyes at all. There has been pure hearkening to an indelible command, and pure obedience to it, or there would be nothing here, even though it be lying beneath the feet, and entering so poignantly into the heart. It is by recognition of blood-ties that this roof has been raised above the head, and kept. It is by recognition of those claims of universal brotherhood, that these outcasts have been suffered to gather themselves here, even as they are; and that there has been preserved for their use as much as they have. For is it not that some eighty people are found in this metropolis, banding themselves together, laying into one store their half-crowns or their hundred guineas—there are both—to maintain these walls, keeping them dry and clean, keeping them warm and whole? Is it not that some score or two of godly souls have been found in the recent past, bequeathing gifts that so six hundred and fifty, at least, of great London's wretched poor may not shiver through the nights of the cruellest weeks of winter weather, but may congregate here, safe from the snow and the frost and the wind, having shelter, and cessation from the bite and the bluster, if it were impossible for them to have anything more!

There might be more, it is true; and more are wanted. There might be hundreds instead of tens, and thousands instead of hundreds, giving what can be given, and soothing what can be soothed. But a truth is not beaten out of being a truth because it is not acted upon by every person having power to act upon it; nor, any more, does self-denying obedience to a command become absence of obedience to a command because thousands—tens of thousands—are unequal to

the self-denial of obeying. It is the few who are faithful who establish fidelity; it is the few who walk by the light who make it certain that the light is there. And that this asylum is seen in the shape that it is seen in does not take from the fact that it was blessed and tender goodness that framed it. Let the mind revert to that. It is obliged to be done as it can be done, not as it would be done if it were designed to fit into anything else. These hapless creatures flocking here for the dear charity of sleep would be coiled up on a doorstep if they were not here (hundreds are coiled up on doorsteps, every living night, even as it is), or shivering under an archway or on a ballast-heap, or in the corners of some common lodging-house stairs, crept to by stealth, and out of which they could be flung, any moment, when their presence was discovered. These hapless creatures cannot be free from what they should be free from; they cannot have habits that are commendable as habits; and this must be thought of, must be met; making it compulsory to order things in a certain method, on certain lines. Moreover (for there is so much to pain, there must be broad reasoning to try and lull some of the pain away), that this should be a refuge is all it sets out to be—a place to fly to, a temporary shelter, emphatically a refuge from the weather when the weather is worst, and the storm so violent that, without this sorry barrier, the storm would kill. A harbour of refuge may not be so constructed as to make it mistaken for a port. Supposing it gave all that successful voyaging gave, voyagers would not be strung to strive for anything beyond; and there would be the result that the eighty (about) law-fulfillers setting out here to lessen misery and suffering, that the score of law-fulfillers who preceded them, would be bringing to pass an increase of misery and suffering, the thing they would abhor. So, by the dim light shrouding everything here, letting it be noted that things are planned for sleep, with an avoidance of anything that would drive sleep away—by the dim light, letting it be made out that the walls of this ward are wide apart, the ceiling high up overhead, that the ward has its whole length and space left bare and blank, with no break from end to end, seeming to hold nothing—nothing, indeed, till the eyes fall, in that deep distress, on that sight upon the floor, let any ray of consolation come that can be induced to come, and—it is best to close the door.

There must be more detail gained though. There must be what can only be had by another entrance; and there can be entrance here. No. The door is shut again; and with the hush of reverence. The missionary is at prayer; the women seated, or on their knees—there has not been light enough, or look enough, to be sure—and to go in would be intrusion. We must pass to the next ward, therefore; wards occurring, door after door, along the passage. It is one not quite full, for inmates are let in at any hour; they are perhaps brought in, in pity, by the police; they do not all range themselves in readiness for that church-clock's stroke of five. It is a ward, too, where, because it is not quite full, the matron can displace one of the trays, or partitions, showing its plan. It consists of a pair of benches thrown on their sides—the pair thrust together to make a hollow box. To bring the box to be of better service as the outline of a bed, the supports that make the benches into benches when benches are required, are hinged, enabling them to be sloped towards the ground, to form a substitute for a pillow, and enabling them to be raised as a lid, to be safe depository—each being under each sleeper's head—for any halfpence, small garments, or other poor property, each sleeper may desire to keep secure. The waterproofs, or skins, in this ward not being all in use either just yet, there they are, hanging one on a hook, and one over each tray, at regular intervals round the walls. They can be handled, if that is all; and they prove to be glazed and plain, a mere thin, impervious sheet, obliged to be this, since only in that form can it be certain they afford no harbourage, and by periodical disinfection can be kept quite clean.

This is a ward, again, where some of the poor women have only just passed in; where a few rise to their feet respectfully when they become aware of the opening of the door; where others, too worn for that much of realisation or nimbleness, retain their seats on the partition-ledges, resting there, or cowering, or nursing a weary child. None seem to be preparing to take off their tattered clothes—how could they? or how could they, after, get them on again?—except shoes, and poor bonnet, and cloak. None break the silence, or betray resentment or surprise. One poor soul, with remnants of womanly tidiness and thrift in her, has needle and thread, and is doing the best there is left her to do, to

sew up her poor rags. Another has taken off her well-nigh shapeless boots, and has balanced them, soles uppermost, at her partition-end, her only chance that they will get somewhat dry. A third, at the left, this first squab nearest the door, is shuffling herself farther and farther down, dragging her leather over her; a baby, already asleep, clasped in her arm, an elder child still looking wonderingly about, sitting up on the next squab at her side.

"Is your baby better?" the matron asks this woman.

And the woman answers. The woman, pleased to have the question put to her, can as much as faintly smile. "Yes, matron," she says, "I think it is."

Better! And its little cheeks have fever in them! And for sure, though its mother holds it tightly to her now, in a quiet sleep, she will not have it in life, sleeping or waking, to hold to her long!

"Were you here at Christmas?" the matron asks, then.

"No, matron," is the answer. "I was not near enough. I was at Bedford."

"Have you walked far to-day?"

"Very far. From Paddington."

Well, Paddington may not be far by mere mileage, except it were the long end of it where it soaks out by canal and mud-heaps, by shanty laundries and swampy brickfield, into Kensal Green. For Paddington, where it has managed to merge itself into the seemliness and luxury of the West End, is scarcely distant from Banner Street an hour, perhaps, by easy wheeling along the road; or half an hour, it may be, by rail underneath. But think of the streets to be traversed, of the mud to be shuffled through between here and there, on nearly shoeless feet, burdened with a child in the arms, and with another clutching at the skirts; burdened also with hunger, with cold, with helplessness—with the knowledge that the hunger and the cold are being borne by the little ones as well! Yet the woman answers still uncomplainingly; still resting a moment on her elbow before laying her head finally and gratefully down.

"And how do you keep yourself, mostly?"

"Knitting," the poor thing replies. "I knit night-caps, and cuffs, and scarves, and babies' socks; and then"—and the smile creeps over her thin face once more, re-installing her as pure woman, instead of letting her drop into one of a type that can easily have identification, that are over-ready (as has been thought) to beset places

where alms are likely to be abundant, over-ready to stand in groups with mere attitude of appeal, with importunity and supplication—"then my husband may be in work in the summer, and that makes it easy."

Poorsoul! She is one forced to avail herself of the conditions of the asylum repeatedly, the matron says; this accounting for how it is her baby's state is known. These conditions are, that inmates once admitted are supplied with tickets admitting them for six nights more, making a week of certain havening that must indeed bring the peace and quietude of a grateful dream. These conditions are, though, that when the seven nights are gone, inmates must be absent fourteen nights before they can be admitted again; and, sad as this may seem on the surface, the object of the rule is on the surface. These six hundred and fifty housed here must not monopolise the housing. The remaining hundreds—let it go to the heart!—forced into the streets, unable to get in here, unable to get in elsewhere, must have so much justice done them as to have it in their power, at intervals, to try for their poor turn. It makes it no wonder that there is the good order apparent here, that there is silence and submission. It makes it no wonder that six hundred and fifty people—that three hundred men, say, supposing the half of them are men (which is about it)—all of them wanting everything, wanting high aims and principles even more than they want food and clothing, wanting the fetters of conventionality and the fear of loss of reputation even more than they want hearths and hearths' comforting; it makes it no wonder that three hundred men can be massed together under one roof-top, and not pull the roof-top down, in insurrection, in anger, in fury, that the world has given them no more than this, when there is so much more in the world to have; that the world has not even this much to give them, except for the worst weeks in the year, and during those worst weeks for a short span. For the world, plainly, has so much worse than this, that this is bounty. For the world has so much less than this, that this has to be striven for watchfully, and, when it is gained, to be paid for by obedience, by adherence to discipline, as is done with all humility.

The men can be seen, if it is wished, by just passing to the other side. The men are here, when the matron has led by more lime-washed passages, by more lime-white stairs, and when, merely with the preface

of gathering up her skirts (there is need !) she enters a ward amidst sad groups of them, just standing, or just stretching out their languid arms. So, too, she enters a ward amidst sadder mounds of them, already under their black waterproofs asleep ; she enters a downstairs passage filled with them, and they fall back quietly to the walls to let her pass ; they make what order the passageway allows them to make, to let her get freely to an open door, leading to their washing-place. In it, some are at the basins, sluicing face and hands ; some are at a trough, where those who choose may take off their boots and wash their feet ; all seem an undistinguishable mass of worn-out labourers, in their poor stained and faded suits, their poor uncared-for beards and hair ; but though there is a sharp glance launched out from a hapless face here and there—chiefly where there is old age, and where use may bring a stir to some enquiry—where there is young manhood, which should be in its strength, which should be in its prime—there there is also submission, there is patience, there is almost abasement, as if these poor homeless brothers had the sense that this shadow that is on them might be thought their shame. "Do not disturb yourselves," is the kind word said to them. "Never mind."

And way is made, past the furnace fire (for supplying heat for the hot-air pipes), and past a great cellar for the furnace-coal, into the poor helpers' kitchens. This one is for the women-helpers ; that one for the men-helpers. They cannot be bright airy kitchens, for they are underground, and in St. Luke's ; but they are warm, and they are clean ; and as the helpers are only some of the homeless themselves, chosen for their suitability and tested powers of getting through the work (all of it being entrusted to them, without any other help, and they being paid a shilling a day for their services, out of which to buy their food), these kitchens must be bitterly hard to turn from when winter nights are over, and when helpers, like the rest, are obliged, no matter what is in store, to go. And way is made upstairs again, where the walls are still a fair width apart, as well as wholesomely white with limewash, and where the steps are still as clean as the rest, and still straightly planned, made low in the rise, easy and safe to ascend. There is, just here, a small stone-floored room, leading off to the right hand—for disinfecting—the place where all articles in use are fumigated with sulphur, removing any

risk in using them again. There are the women's washing-rooms ; fair-sized lavatories, four or five basins of a row, with taps and waste-plugs, and soap, and towel. There is a drying-room, part of the arrangements of the laundry ; the towels used every night being washed every day by the helpers, and there being no drying-grounds in Banner Street, and no chances of drying-weather in winter months, even if Banner Street stood within reach of moor and meadow, or by a handy open hedge. There is, in turn, the office where the officers congregate—the superintendent, a detective (his observant eyes scanning every face), the missionary, the clerk. There are these clean and quite bare benches on which applicants can take a rest during the few minutes' wait there is obliged to be, at times, for tickets to be looked at and new claims heard. There is this sliding window where names have to be declared (if names, in the abjectness and the wandering have not been forgotten or purposely effaced !)—this sliding-window where ages must be stated, and occupation, and the town or parish where shelter was last obtained. There is the inspection-room, where the doctor sees each applicant as each arrives ; judging by general aspect, by having the hands held out, or some small part of the skin bared, whether infectious fever is present, or other loathsomeness ; whether the poor vagrant is bad enough for restoratives to be given, or stimulant, or comforts ; or to receive an order for quick removal to the infirmary or elsewhere. There is this second panel or partition—quite clean like the rest, and necessarily plain and bare—where a dole of half a pound of bread is put into each poor hand on entering (and on going out), and through which, after the bread is grasped, there is straight, and swift, and silent passing.

"One !" is the manner of the bread-helper's cry ; the bread, which is clean-cut portions of quartern loaves, being piled in a vast basket-truck ready to his hand. When "One" approaches, receives, and is gone. "Two !" When "Two" approaches, receives, and is gone. "Three," "Four," and the rest ; each one coming and going, and there not being another sound.

A moment, however. Here is no such strict dumb silence over one wan soul. She is a poor old hag, gaunt and grey ; belated, and a straggler ; and as she takes a hunch of bread, she takes, in its company, some

poor knotted bundle, clutched preciously in her shawl-end, under her thin arm.

"Stop!" the matron cries to her; quick, as she, as matron, is bound to be, to see that all things are safe and fair, that rules get no transgression. "What have you there?"

The shambling step is stopped, of course; the weak old face turns round. "It's all right, matron," is the answer coming with the stop. "It's nothing wrong."

"No matches?"

"Oh no, matron"—for the poor soul knows (surely by having used the refuge many a night!) what the laws allow, and what the laws forbid. "It's only"—and she lowers her voice, low enough, as might be thought, already—"cold potatoes."

Yes. And this withered creature, in her age, in her feebleness, will take the dry bread of the good asylum, and will take her sorry mess of stone-cold potatoes, the gift, for sure, of some charitable householder knowing her need, and the two together will be the solace and savour of her winter-evening meal!

Yet even she makes no complaint, no supplication. She goes her way, even an inmate well-to-do; an inmate with prospects and fair privileges. For, out of those sleeping here, this night, with her, will there be many in possession of such an additional store? May it not well be that this old soul may get civil approaches from her compeers, or such warm welcome as circumstances admit, simply for the sake of the good things she owns, a portion of which she can exchange, or generously give away?

It is enough. The refuge can be passed from. The January night can be met. It is not done without new sighs; it is not done without new heaviness; and it is well as the door is closed, that the last words listened to were records of a Christmas dinner, when all who had slept on those floors on Christmas Eve sat down to a good meat meal, and had no waiting, at five o'clock, in that gutter, on that kerb, but were let to pass into their wards, their benches turned into partitions again, able to wrap their rags in those black water-proofs, for once in the winter sufficiently fed.

It takes away some of the pain; but it leaves this, indelible: Had these poor creatures work, they could be sufficiently fed every day that comes. Is there no mode in this big England of letting work be found?

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III. CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER a moment or two of pained silence, as though subtly conscious of Davey's immobility—conscious of there being one creature present whom she could neither bend to her will nor sway by her passion—Hester looked across her shoulder at that still and silent figure by the closed door.

The pallor of his face she could hardly realise, since the ruddy shade from the lamp gave it an unreal glow; but the downcast eyes, the knitted brow, the folded arms, all these things spoke to Hester Devenant of a day of reckoning near at hand, and the knowledge tortured her.

Why should Davey have appeared upon the scene just at this particular crisis? Why should his meddlesome hand mar her well-laid schemes? If he had bided where he was just a little while longer all would have been well. Now, who could say he might not meet plot with counter-plot?

She was not given to cowardice, and yet her heart harboured something very like fear of this simple creature—this kinless thing that had been picked up in the street—a mere waif and stray—a castaway, reared on the charity of others.

How she loathed and despised herself for acknowledging this influence—this mean, trembling dread! How she loathed the man who inspired it, and who had now crossed her path when least she wanted him!

"I was more faithful than you," she said, hissing the words out fiercely—"more faithful by far than you who professed such love for your master."

She had lost the softer mood in which she had moaned over Gabriel's lost love, and the possible future of which Geoffrey Stirling's sin had robbed her. Then the woman in her held the mastery; now the fiend was uppermost.

"I was more faithful to my trust than you to yours," she said again, willing to goad Davey into speech.

"Were you?" he answered, and once more the grey eyes flashed a challenge to the black.

She winced beneath that glance, and when she spoke again, looked up at Ralph, not round at Davey.

"There was a chain about your father's

neck, and by it hung a golden coin. 'If you are near me when I die,' he said, 'see that it is buried with me. It has lain here—here on my heart all these long and weary years.' I was faithful in that—faithful in that. I met the vicar as I was going down the avenue—I told him that the little golden coin was to be left upon the heart that beat no more."

"What torment is this that I am being dragged through?" cried Ralph, the plaint ending in a hoarse inarticulate moan. "Why was I not there to hear those precious words—to garner them up in my heart for ever? Why did he send me from him, to bear his burden of sorrow—be what it might—alone?"

"Ask him!" said Hester, pointing at Davey with scornful finger; "or, since he is tongue-tied, shall I speak for him? 'Tell him that it wasn't want of love made me send him away so often, but that I feared his innocent eyes and loving ways; tell him I craved for him, as the thirsty crave for water. Tell him I have confessed.'"

Hester spoke as one who from constant mental repetition knows a sentence off by heart. She spoke slowly and deliberately, willing that each separate word should sink into the heart she sought to wound.

Ralph turned a long, agonised, reproachful look on David Robin.

Davey's silence was broken; his calmness shaken.

"Master Ralph—Master Ralph, come away out this cursed house!" he cried, stretching forth pleading hands, speaking with trembling lips; "I will tell you all and everything you like to ask. I will keep nothing back. Only come—come out from the presence of the woman who hunted your father to his death—who would hunt you down, too, because you are your father's son."

From one to the other Ralph gazed in wonder and despair. The deep waters were overwhelming him; the sorrows of death were compassing him about. But a slender hand clung to his, and in that clinging pressure lay all possibility of strength and endurance.

"Go with Davey—oh, my darling, go!" whispered Hilda's voice in his ear. Her warm breath fanned his cheek.

Amid all the misery and desolation, all the cruel bitter uncertainty, the blinding cloud of fears that beset him, in her nearness and her sympathy lay his only sense of comfort and of courage.

Hilda still believed her mother to be

the victim of wild and morbid fancies. She imagined that she now possessed the secret of those stormy interviews which had taken place between Hester and Davey in the past, as well as of her mother's dread of the man who had once been her closest friend. She interpreted Davey's silence to mean a delicate restraint put upon himself for her own sake and Master Ralph's.

His efforts to get Ralph to leave the house appeared to her under the same aspect. Besides, it wrung her heart to see her lover suffer! She longed to throw her arm about him, lead him forth into the quiet shadowy garden, and there kiss the sorrow from his set pale lips, and smile the sadness from his eyes.

She could smile in his face though her heart were breaking, she thought to herself, if only she might wile him from his grief, if only she might win one smile in answer, and with her head upon his breast, tell him that these wild thoughts and weird imaginings would pass from her mother's mind with the darkness of the night, as they had often done before.

"Go," she whispered, "go with Davey, and to-morrow—come to me again. This cloud will then have passed."

Hester's keen ear caught the words.

"He shall not go!" she cried. "No one shall leave this room till I have said my say and had my way. Hilda—wilful child!—are you going to measure your will against mine after all these years? How dare you—how dare you treat me so?"

She started to her feet, hurried to the door, and set her arm across it.

There was something so resolved, so desperate in her air, that both men felt powerless to cross her will, helpless to silence her.

"It is you I have to thank," she said, turning the light of her beautiful eyes full upon Davey, "for my own child calling me a madwoman. Mad, mad, mad! that is what they all say. Who cares? If madness wins the day, as well be mad as sane. Listen, then, Hilda, to what this mad mother of yours has to say. Listen. Since your lover will not give you up, you must give him up; since he will not break the link between you, your hand must be the one to snap it. Would you cling to the hand of the man whose father murdered yours? Think, child, how you used to love your father! Do you remember all the pretty names he had for you? And you—

how you used to run and meet him, clip him round the neck, and laugh for gladness that he had come again."

Slowly as one drawn by a power against which no rebellion is possible, Hilda drew herself from her lover's side; step by step she came nearer and nearer to the woman who was calling up those dear memories of the past. The girl's cheek was deadly pale; her eyes, full of fear and sorest trouble, were fixed upon her mother's face; her hands, clasped as those of one in prayer, were held out in a dumb and pitiful entreaty.

"Do you remember when your father died, how you stole into the room where he lay, turned aside the covering from his face, and stood there, wondering that he did not hear you speak—did not turn and smile upon the child he had so loved?"

Hilda's features worked, her lips trembled, the great tears gathered in her gentle eyes—gathered and fell adown her pallid cheeks.

Then the tigress in Hester sprang to life again, treading the softer mood under foot.

"Remember more still," she said; "remember how he suffered; call to mind his wan face looking in upon us as you sat at work in the sunshine—and the last long kiss he gave you, Hilda, as he left us never to return till others bore him home upon their shoulders."

Strange memories were crowding upon Hilda now that Hester little thought of; memories of words that scourged a broken suffering man as cruel thongs; of desperate passionate resentment in her father's eyes; of bitter retort falling from faltering lips; and so a great pity for her mother grew about her heart, the secret sorrow and remorse of whose sad life was hers alone.

"Mother, mother, do not speak to me of all these things to-night; I am weak—I cannot bear it—nor can you. See how pale you are, and how your hand shakes! Oh, have pity, dear, on me and on yourself. To-morrow we will speak of all these things—not now, not now."

"I shall speak what I will, and when I will, and you shall listen. I want you now to stand in spirit by your murdered father as he lay stark and cold that day when all the world was beautiful with sunshine and with flowers—and all my heart was one black hell of pain."

Hilda bowed her face upon her hands. She was back in the terrible past. She

was deaf for the time even to the inarticulate cry of tenderness and pity that broke from her lover's lips.

"Remembering all that, can you, his dearest, best-loved treasure, the child he loved far more dearly than the mother who bore you—can you, Hilda, lift your eyes to mine and tell me that you love the son of his murderer?"

Hilda raised her head, raised her eyes, streaming with tears, to Hester's face.

"I love him," she said simply, yet with loving passion; "I love him with all my heart."

"Tear the love from your heart. Never heed though it pain and bleed. Let me see how brave you can be; let me hear you tell the son of him who made me a widow, and my child fatherless, to quit your presence—to enter it no more."

At this, Ralph started to the girl's side, clasped her in his arm, and gazed with straining eyes upon her face.

"You will not, Hilda—you will not do this thing?" he pleaded. "I know not what has come to me to-night—the world is changed; fear and dread are all around me. There may be a terrible future to face. Nerve me for it, oh, my darling, be it what it may! Be it never so bitter, never so full of pain and shame, the touch of your lips, the clasp of your hand, shall keep me brave, shall strengthen me to do the right, counting the cost as nothing, since my love is true to me."

Like one who moves, a shadow among shadows, part and parcel of a dream, Hilda turned, and met the dark and eager eyes that strove to read her own. Then she raised her hands to her head, pushed back the heavy nut-brown locks from her brow, and drew a long, deep, shuddering sigh.

Ralph's arm was about her still, but he felt that his touch had no power to move her. She was mesmerised by a will stronger and more powerful than her own—one that, half by love and half by fear, had tyrannised over and swayed her through a lifetime.

Her lips moved, but no words were audible.

A terrible light was breaking in upon her.

Facts, however distorted and magnified, underlay what she had deemed but fancies.

Davey's face began to tell her this much. Ralph, too—did he not speak of possible horrors to be faced in the future, of pain and shame, and right to be done, that wrong might be undone?

What did these things mean?

Then, like a flash, came the memory of a night of storm and rain, a night of wet leaves shining in the fitful moonlight that gleamed through drifting clouds, and of a lonely figure out among the shadows and the shining, lifting clasped hands to heaven, and of a voice, hoarse and muffled with passion, that cried out, "Liar—murderer—thief!" while a little child clung to a fluttering gown, sobbing and afraid.

Was it true, that dreadful valediction, hurled at a shadowy figure flitting away among the trees, near where the dykes shone dark and bright? Was it true? And if it were, what—oh, what of Ralph? Who could shield that dear true heart from the infinite pain of knowledge?

Fears for her lover, piteous memories of her father, new and strange imaginings as to her mother's life of pain unutterable and hoarded vengeance—all these thoughts made cruel turmoil in Hilda's heart.

Davey, watching the sweet tell-tale face, now so pale, and wan, and troubled, was at no loss to read her thoughts. The story of that dastardly night's work in the squire's room three years ago could find no voice with Hilda by. Ralph must learn it—must learn each detail of it; but might he not be won, through his great love for Hilda, to keep the ghastly record from her?

Would her love be strong enough to stand the test of all that now must fall upon the head of Geoffrey Stirling's son?

As Hilda, swayed by the potent influence of her own growing convictions, turned a lovely pallid face and passionate fond eyes on Ralph, as who would say, "Sorrow is at hand—I am here, love, to share it with you!" Hester spoke again, half laughing:

"So you begin to see that I am not quite mad, after all?" she said. "Hilda—come to me."

She had crossed the room, and was sitting in her old place by the hearth. She seemed to be gathering her wits together for some supreme effort.

Hilda moved to her mother's side, knelt there, and catching her hand to her bosom, fondled it.

"Poor mother!" she said softly, between the kisses.

But Hester, who had seemed at first hardly conscious of those sweet caresses, snatched her hand from Hilda's hold.

"What fooling is this?" she said. "Who asked you for pity? I have asked

for no one's pity, all these years. It is not pity I have longed for, it is not pity I want now. Listen to me, Hilda; give me deeds not words, submission not kisses. This headstrong lover of yours will not give you up, it seems. Let me hear you cast him off. You are Gabriel Devenant's child, you loved your father, or you say you did; time has not blunted the memory of the days when you and he were happy together, when he called you by fond sweet names, and bore you in his arms when the way was too rough and hard for your tender feet. To him the child was dearer than the wife. I lost his love, and I could not win it back again, because no time was given me; but you, he loved you, Hilda, and to you it is given to avenge him! Nay, do not moan like a sick child. Do not play the coward. If you suffer, if others must suffer, what have I done—what have I done with my maimed and broken life, my hot indignant heart burning like a scorching fire within my breast, all these years?"

At the sound of the lamentation that burst from Hilda's lips, Ralph started forward; but Hester waved him back.

"Not yet," she said imperiously, "not yet; my child must choose between us—you or me; but she has not spoken, she has not chosen yet—give her time."

Hilda, casting herself forward, flung her arms about her mother's shoulders, and would have spoken, but Hester, thrusting her back, bade her keep silence.

"Look at my hands," she said mockingly; "when I was young like you they were rough with toil, no task was too menial for them; but you, Hilda, will be a fine lady, with servants to wait upon you, and a husband to anticipate your slightest wish. You will be called a lucky woman, one to be envied, but all your luck will be won at the cost of the heart's blood of suffering men and women, of ill-gotten gold that must bring a curse—that has brought a curse upon the hand that clutches it. You will pillow your head on the breast of the man whose father built his own prosperity upon the ruin of others. You will live in luxury upon the riches basely stolen from the poor, whose little hoards, swept into one great heap, made Geoffrey Stirling rich, made me a widow, and robbed you of the father who loved you dearer than his life."

Crouching, shivering, sobbing where she knelt, hiding her face amid the folds of her mother's gown, Hilda bent beneath

this hail of words, as the young sapling bows before the hurricane. The low plaint that broke from her white lips sounded like the cry of a beaten child. Her heart was rent in twain. Her mother's words seemed to thrash her like cruel blows, making her brain reel with the agony of them.

"How much longer am I to wait?" said Hester's resolute voice, as the girl kept silence, save for faint moans of pain. "Tell this lover of yours to go, let him have his sentence from the lips that he has kissed, and that have kissed him back, not knowing that they touched a thing abominable."

"No!" cried Hilda, springing to her feet, "he is not that, he is not that. To me he is all that is brightest and best. He is the man I love, the man who loves me; more I know not, more I cannot say. Ralph, teach me what to say, dear! Leave me, if you must."

She swayed as she spoke, and would have fallen, but that fond arms were round her, fond lips touched tenderly the white and trembling mouth that had grown dumb with pain.

"Torture her no more," cried Ralph, turning fiercely upon Hester, still holding that tender burthen in his arms; "I will spare you the need of any further words. I will go, as you have bid her tell me to do. I will go, and face life as you have made it for me. I will search out all the truth, shrinking from nothing that the truth shall tell me. If I come to stand, poor, friendless, stripped of all my wealth before the world (because it is not mine to keep), if this be so, and then she still clings to me, in poverty, and shame, and pain, I will not give her up. I will keep her in spite of you. But, even if you take her from me, you cannot rob me of the past. I would rather have the memory of Hilda than the love of any other woman. My darling, my love!" he said sobbingly, bending to the white face upon his breast, "we will not forget each other, will we? Remember the old song, dear:

"It will not—it cannot be—laid aside,
It is not a thing to forget or hide.

My love, my love! in all my broken aching heart to-night I feel its sweetness still."

Then, with a kiss, he let her go.

"Come, Davey," he said; "come!" and was gone ere the other had time to follow.

Hilda, voiceless, colourless, a breathing

statue, followed him with strained and misty eyes till the door closed upon him; then, still staring at the cruel barrier which had shut him from her sight, she sank at Hester's feet, and her lovely head fell heavy and lifeless across her mother's lap.

Davey, whose ear had been following the dying sound of Master Ralph's footsteps along the road, broke the silence sharply.

"Do not touch her," he said, as Hester, with a scared look, bent above that helpless figure at her knee. "Leave her in peace a little while; you have not given her much in all her life—give her a little now! I have one word to say before I follow Master Ralph. You have broken your oath, the oath taken in the dead presence of the man whose murderess you are."

Hester shrank back in her chair, white and trembling.

"Not that," she said; "not that! Call me anything but that!"

"I call you what you are. And now look there," and he pointed to Hilda's senseless form. "You are trying to murder your child's heart; but I tell you that as you been have foiled once, so shall you be foiled again! The strain is tough, I know, but her love and his will stand it."

Then, seeing that Hilda stirred, Davey kept silence. He knelt beside her, raised her on his arm, bade her be of good cheer—told her to keep a brave heart—to hope and trust.

She smiled at him, holding out her hand for his, and so, staggering to her feet, let him lead her to the open window, where the balmy air might fan her cheek.

"Go," she said, "go to Ralph; he needs you more than I do."

Hester watched the two furtively, twisting her hands the one in the other.

She watched Davey as a cat watches a mouse; but not a word passed her lips until the very echo of his footsteps had died away, and no sound broke the stillness of the night save the murmur of the river, and the whisper of the breeze.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LVI. SCARBOROUGH'S REVENGE.

ALL these things were not done at Tretton altogether unknown to Augustus Scarborough. Tidings as to the will reached him, and then he first perceived the injury he had done himself in lending his assistance to the payment of the creditors. Had his brother been utterly bankrupt, so that the Jews might have seized any money that might have come to him, his father would have left no will in his favour. All that was now intelligible to Augustus. The idea that his father should strip the house of every stick of furniture, and the estate of every chattel upon it, had not occurred to him before the thing was done. He had thought that his father was indifferent to all personal offence, and therefore he had been offensive. He found out his mistake, and therefore was angry with himself. But he still thought that he had been right in regard to the creditors. Had the creditors been left in the possession of their unpaid bonds, they would have offered terrible impediments to the taking possession of the property. He had been right then, he thought. The fact was that his father had lived too long. However, the property would be left to him, Augustus, and he must make up his mind to buy the other things from Mountjoy. He at any rate would have to provide the funds out of which Mountjoy must live, and he would take care that he did not buy the chattels twice over. It was thus he consoled himself, till rumours of something worse reached his

EAR.

How the rumours reached him it would be difficult to say. There were probably

some among the servants who got an inkling of what the squire was doing when Mr. Grey again came down. Or Miss Scarborough had some confidential friend. Or Mr. Grey's clerk may have been indiscreet. The tidings in some unformed state did reach Augustus and astounded him. His belief in his father's story as to his brother's illegitimacy had been unfixed and doubtful. Latterly it had verged towards more thorough belief as the creditors had taken their money—less than a third of what would have been theirs had the power remained with them of recovering their full debt. The creditors had thus proved their belief, and they were people not likely to believe such a statement without some foundation. But at any rate he had conceived it to be impossible that his own father should go back from his first story, and again make himself out to be doubly a liar and doubly a knave.

But if it were so, what should he do? Was it not the case that in such event he would be altogether ruined, a penniless adventurer with his profession absolutely gone from him? What little money he had got together had been expended on behalf of Mountjoy—a sprat thrown out to catch a whale. Everything according to the present tidings had been left to Mountjoy. He had only half known his father, who had turned against him with virulence, because of his unkindness. Who could have expected that a man in such a condition should have lived so long, and have been capable of a will so powerful? He had not dreamt of a hatred so inveterate as his father's for him.

He received news also from Tretton, that his father was not now expected by anyone to live long.

"It may be a week, the doctors say."

and it is hardly possible that he should remain alive for another month." Such was the news which reached him from his own emissary at Tretton. What had he better do in the emergency of the moment?

There was only one possibly effective step that he could take. He might, of course, remain tranquil, and accept what chance might give him, when his father should have died. But he might at once go down to Tretton and demand an interview with the dying man. He did not think that his father, even on his death-bed, would refuse to see him. His father's pluck was indomitable, and he thought that he could depend on his own. At any rate he resolved that he would immediately go to Tretton and take his chance. He reached the house about the middle of the day, and at once sent his name up to his father. Miss Scarborough was sitting by her brother's bedside, and from time to time was reading to him a few words. "Augustus!" he said, as soon as the servant had left the room. "What does Augustus want with me? The last time he saw me he bade me die out of hand if I wished to retrieve the injury I had done him."

"Do not think of that now, John," his sister said.

"Not think of it? I will think of it to the last moment. Words such as those, spoken by a son to his father, demand a little thought. Were I to tell you that I did not think of them, would you not know that I was a hypocrite?"

"You need not speak of them, John."

"Not unless he came here to harass my last moments. I strove to do very much for him;—you know with what return. Mountjoy has been, at any rate, honest and straightforward; and, considering all things, not lacking in respect. I shall, at any rate, have some pleasure in letting Augustus know the state of my mind."

"What shall I say to him?" his sister asked.

"Tell him that he had better go back to London. I have tried them both, as few sons can be tried by their father, and I know them now. Tell him, with my compliments, that it will be better for him not to see me. There can be nothing pleasant said between us. I have no communication to make to him which could in the least interest him."

But before night came the squire had been talked over, and had agreed to see his

son. "The interview will be easy enough for me," he had said, "but I cannot imagine what he will get from it. But let him come as he will."

Augustus spent much of the intervening time in discussing the matter with his aunt. But not a word on the subject was spoken by him to Mountjoy, whom he met at dinner, and with whom he spent the evening in company with Mr. Merton. The two hours after dinner were melancholy enough. The three adjourned to the smoking-room, and sat there almost without conversation. A few words were said about the hunting, but Mountjoy had not hunted this winter. There were a few also of greater interest about the shooting. The shooting was of course still the property of the old man, and, in the early months, had without many words spoken become as it were an appanage of the condition of life to which Augustus aspired; but of late Mountjoy had assumed the command. "You found plenty of pheasants here, I suppose," Augustus remarked.

"Well, yes; not too many. I didn't trouble myself much about it. When I saw a pheasant I shot it. I've been a little troubled in spirit, you know."

"Gambling again, I heard."

"That didn't trouble me much. Merton can tell you that we've had a sick house."

"Yes, indeed," said Merton. "It hasn't seemed to be a time in which a man would think very much of his pheasants."

"I don't know why," said Augustus, who was determined not to put up with the rebuke implied in the doctor's words. After that there was nothing more said between them till they all went to their separate apartments.

"Don't contradict him," his aunt said to him the next morning, "and if he reprimands you, acknowledge that you have been wrong."

"That's hard, when I haven't been wrong."

"But so much depends upon it; and he is so stern. Of course, I wish well to both of you. There is plenty;—plenty; if only you could agree together."

"But the injustice of his treatment! Is it true that he now declares Mountjoy to be the eldest son?"

"I believe so. I do not know, but I believe it."

"Think of what his conduct has been to me. And then you tell me that I am to own that I have been wrong! In what have I been wrong?"

"He is your father, and I suppose you have said hard words to him."

"Did I rebuke him because he had fraudulently kept me for so many years in the position of a younger son? Did I not forgive him that iniquity?"

"But he says you are a younger son."

"This last move," he said with great passion, "has only been made in an attempt to punish me, because I would not tell him that I was under a world of obligations to him for simply declaring the truth as to my birth. We cannot both be his eldest son."

"No, certainly not both."

"At last he declared that I was his heir. If I did say hard words to him, were they not justified?"

"Not to your father," said Miss Scarborough, shaking her head.

"That is your idea? How was I to abstain? Think what had been done to me. Through my whole life he had deceived me, and had attempted to rob me."

"But he says that he had intended to get the property for you."

"To get it! It was mine. According to what he said it was my own. He had robbed me to give it to Mountjoy. Now he intends to rob me again in order that Mountjoy may have it. He will leave such a kettle of fish behind him, with all his manœuvring, that neither of us will be the better for Tretton."

Then he went to the squire. In spite of what had passed between him and his aunt he had thought deeply of his conduct to his father in the past, and of the manner in which he would now carry himself. He was aware that he had behaved—not badly, for that he esteemed nothing—but most unwisely. When he had found himself to be the heir to Tretton he had fancied himself to be almost the possessor, and had acted on the instincts which in such a case would have been natural to him. To have pardoned the man because he was his father, and then to have treated him with insolent disdain, as some dying old man, almost entirely beneath his notice, was what he felt the nature of the circumstances demanded. And whether the story was true or false it would have been the same. He had come at last to believe it to be true, and had therefore been the more resolute; but, whether it were true or false, the old man had struck his blow, and must abide by it. Till the moment came in which he had received that com-

munication from Tretton, the idea had never occurred to him that another disposition of the property might still be within his father's power. But he had little known the old man's power, or the fertility of his resources, or the extent of his malice. "After what you have done you should cease to stay and disturb us," he had once said, when his father had jokingly alluded to his own death. He had at once repented, and had felt that such a speech had been iniquitous as coming from a son. But his father had, at the moment, expressed no deep animosity. Some sarcastic words had fallen from him of which Augustus had not understood the bitterness. But he had remembered it since, and was now not so much surprised at his father's wish to injure him as at his power.

But could he have any such power? Mr. Grey, he knew, was on his side, and Mr. Grey was a thorough lawyer. All the world was on his side, all the world having been instructed to think and to believe that Mr. Scarborough had not been married till after Mountjoy was born. All the world had been much surprised, and would be unwilling to encounter another blow. Should he go into his father's room altogether penitent, or should he hold up his head and justify himself?

One thing was brought home to him by thinking, as a matter of which he might be convinced. No penitence could now avail him anything. He had at any rate by this time looked sufficiently into his father's character to be sure that he would not forgive such an offence as his had been. Any vice, any extravagance, almost any personal neglect, would have been pardoned. "I have so brought him up," the father would have said, "and the fault must be counted as my own." But this son had deliberately expressed a wish for his father's death, and had expressed it in his father's presence. He had shown not only neglect, which may arise at a distance, and may not be absolutely intentional; but these words had been said with the purpose of wounding, and were, and would be, unpardonable. Augustus, as he went along the corridor to his father's room, determined that he would at any rate not be penitent.

"Well, sir, how do you find yourself?" he said, walking in briskly, and putting out his hand to his father. The old man languidly gave his hand, but only smiled. "I hear of you, though not from you, and

they tell me that you have not been quite so strong of late."

"I shall soon cease to stay and trouble you," said the squire, with affected weakness, in a voice hardly above a whisper, using the very words which Augustus had spoken.

"There have been some moments between us, sir, which have been, unfortunately, unpleasant."

"And yet I have done so much to make them pleasant to you! I should have thought that the offer of all Tretton would have gone for much with you!"

Augustus was again taken in. There was a piteous whine about his father's voice which once more deceived him. He did not dream of the depth of the old man's anger. He did not imagine that at such a moment it could boil over with such ferocity; nor was he altogether aware of the catlike quietude with which he could pave the way for his last spring. Mountjoy, by far the least gifted of the two, had gained the truer insight to his father's character.

"You had done much, or rather, as I supposed, circumstances had done much."

"Circumstances!"

"The facts, I mean, as to Mountjoy's birth and my own."

"I have not always left myself to be governed by actual circumstances."

"If there was any omission on my part of an expression of proper feeling, I regret it."

"I don't know that there was. What is proper feeling? There was no hypocrisy, at any rate."

"You sometimes are a little bitter, sir."

"I hope you won't find it so when I'm gone."

"I don't know what I said that has angered you; but I may have been driven to say what I did not feel."

"Certainly not to me."

"I'm not here to beg pardon for any special fault, as I do not quite know of what I am accused."

"Of nothing. There is no accusation at all."

"Nor what the punishment is to be. I have learnt that you have left to Mountjoy all the furniture in the house."

"Yes, poor boy! When I found that you had turned him out."

"I never turned him out—not till your house was open to receive him."

"You would not have wished him to go into the poor-house."

"I did the very best for him. I kept him going when there was no one else to give him a shilling."

"He must have had a bitter time," said the father. "I hope it may have done him good."

"I think I have behaved to him just as an elder brother should have done. He was not particularly grateful, but that was not my fault."

"Still I thought it best to leave him the old sticks about the place. As he was to have the property, it was better that he should have the sticks." As he said this he managed to turn himself round and look his son full in the face. Such a look as it was! There was the gleam of victory, and the glory of triumph, and the venom of malice. "You wouldn't have them separated, would you?"

"I have heard of some further trick of this kind."

"Just the ordinary way in which things ought to be allowed to run. Mr. Grey, who is a very good man, persuaded me. No man ought to interfere with the law. An attempt in that direction led to evil. Mountjoy is the eldest son, you know."

"I know nothing of the kind."

"Oh, dear, no; there is no question at all as to the date of my marriage with your mother. We were married in quite a straightforward way at Rummelsburg. When I wanted to save the property from those harpies, I was surprised to find how easily I managed it. Grey was a little soft there; an excellent man, but too credulous for a lawyer."

"I do not believe a word of it."

"You'll find it all go as naturally as possible when I have ceased to stay and be troublesome. But one thing I must say in your favour."

"What do you mean?"

"I never could have managed it all unless you had consented to that payment of the creditors. Indeed, I must say that was chiefly your own doing. When you first suggested it, I saw what a fine thing you were contriving for your brother. I should think, after that, of leaving it all, so that you need not find out the truth when I am dead. I do think I had so managed it that you would have had the property. Mountjoy, who has some foolish feeling about his mother, and who is obstinate as a pig, would have fought it out; but I had so contrived that you would have had it. I had sealed up every document referring

to the Rummelsburg marriage, and had addressed them all to you. I couldn't have made it safer, could I?"

"I don't know what you mean?"

"You would have been enabled to destroy every scrap of the evidence which will be wanted to prove your brother's legitimacy. Had I burned the papers I could not have put them more beyond poor Mountjoy's reach. Now they are quite safe, in Mr. Grey's office; his clerk took them away with him. I would not leave them here with Mountjoy because,—well,—you might come, and he might be murdered." Now Mr. Scarborough had had his revenge.

"You think you have done your duty," said Augustus.

"I do not care two straws about doing my duty, young man." Here Mr. Scarborough raised himself in part, and spoke in that strong voice which was supposed to be so deleterious to him. "Or rather, in seeking my duty, I look beyond the conventionalities of the world. I think that you have behaved infamously, and that I have punished you! Because of Mountjoy's weakness, because he had been knocked off his legs, I endeavoured to put you upon yours. You at once turned upon me, when you thought the deed was done, and bade me go—and bury myself. You were a little too quick in your desire to become the owner of Tretton Park at once. I have stayed long enough to give some further trouble. You will not say, after this, that I am non compos, and unable to make a will. You will find that, under mine, not one penny piece, not one scrap of property, will become yours. Mountjoy will take care of you, I do not doubt. He must hate you, but will recognise you as his brother. I am not so soft-hearted, and will not recognise you as my son. Now you may go away." So saying, he turned himself round to the wall, and refused to be induced to utter another word. Augustus began to speak, but when he had commenced his second sentence, the old man rung his bell. "Mary," said he to his sister, "will you have the goodness to get Augustus to go away? I am very weak, and if he remains he will be the death of me. He can't get anything by killing me at once; it is too late for that."

Then Augustus did leave the room, and before the night came had left Tretton also. He presumed there was nothing left for him to do there. One word he

did say to Mountjoy: "You will understand, Mountjoy, that, when our father is dead, Tretton will not become your property."

"I shall understand nothing of the kind," said Mountjoy, "but I suppose Mr. Grey will tell me what I am to do."

THE OUTER HEBRIDES.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

VARIOUS circumstances have of late contributed to bring the Western Isles into unwonted prominence. Perhaps to the general public they have become chiefly familiar as the scene of several clever and poetic novels. Latterly, however, they have forced themselves into political notice in consequence of what is known as "The Crofters' Agitation," i.e., the strong-handed manner in which the peasants have endeavoured to secure redress of certain grievances in connection with their rights of pasture, without due regard to the law of the land.

Whether in this matter individual sympathy be bestowed on landlord or tenant, there can be no division of feeling in the deep commiseration called forth by the discovery of the terrible condition of positive famine which now prevails throughout all the Hebrides, and on a great part of the mainland—a famine for which the people are in no way responsible, for it is due to no improvidence, but solely to the total failure of one crop after another. The people have toiled as usual, but without result. Even in a good year the harvest returns are so poor that life can only be supported by combining every possible work. The farmers are also fishers, and on some isles kelp-burners, and the money made by the fishing enables the crofters to purchase an extra supply of meal to make up the deficiency of their poor little fields.

Last year every resource in turn failed. The herring fishery yielded little or nothing. The time and labour therein expended proved dead loss. The potato crop proved a total failure, whole fields yielding only a few miserable little diseased roots the size of walnuts. The oat crop was promising, but just when it was ripe, and the time of harvest had come, a fearful hurricane swept the isles and all the northern coasts, and the grain that stood all ready cut in the fields was carried away and scattered over mountain and sea, and hopelessly lost. Now the people are left

empty-handed, with neither corn nor potatoes for present or future use. All these thousands of our fellow-subjects are absolutely dependent on the charity of the mainland for their actual subsistence.* Committees have been appointed for the relief of the most urgent cases of need, and meal is now being distributed as far as possible, but the need continues greatly in excess of the supply. The committee in the Isle of Lewis alone, state that the funds at their disposal are well-nigh expended, and that at least one thousand five hundred pounds a month will be required to keep the people in life, till the next harvest is sown and reaped. If this represents the necessities of one isle, some idea may be formed of the general condition of the group.

It is rather startling to anyone who drifts idly, as I did myself, to the Western Isles, under a general impression of going to see Skye, and perhaps also Staffa, and Iona, and Mull, suddenly to realise that these Hebrides are in fact an archipelago of well-nigh five hundred isles and islets! To be strictly accurate, I believe their actual number is four hundred and ninety, a calculation which includes every rocky islet whereon even one sheep can be pastured, and extending so far south as Bute and Arran, and as far west as St. Kilda. About a hundred and twenty of these isles possess human inhabitants, but many must be indeed tiny communities.

Of the Outer Hebrides, the principal are Lewis and Harris, which together form what is commonly spoken of as The Long Island. North and South Uist and Benbecula are also virtually one isle, being all connected by fords which are passable at low tide. The Long Island, which has upwards of twenty-five thousand inhabitants, ranks third in point of size among Britain's minor isles, so that it has a decided claim to respect. In fact, for many a long year these isles were altogether independent of the mainland, and subject to chiefs so piratical as to be very troublesome neighbours. This state of things continued till Harold Haarfager took possession of the whole group, which continued nominally subject to Norway till A.D. 1266, when they were transferred to Scotland. In the middle of the thirteenth

century there arose an island conqueror who contrived to gain supreme power over all the isles, and for two hundred years his descendants held sway, till the isles were finally reconquered by James the Fifth.

We had spent some pleasant weeks in cruising along the coasts of Skye, when it was voted that we should take wing for a further flight. So the little yacht spread her white sails, and a favouring breeze carried us from Loch Staffin, to Rodal in the isle of Harris, where the chief point of interest is a very old church, dignified with the name of St. Clement's Cathedral. Its fine square tower is said to be the oldest building in Scotland, with the exception of part of St. Mungo's cathedral at Glasgow.

It has a few quaint bits of old carving, and was the burial-place of sundry old lords of isle and ocean, including some of the MacLeods of Harris, whose monuments are inside the church. On one of these rests a figure of a knight in armour, with a two-handed broadsword. Another knight sleeps in his shirt of mail and high-peaked helmet, his feet resting on his dogs. The tombs of the island chiefs are generally distinguished from those of the Vikingr, by their having hounds in full cry in pursuit of a deer engraven round the tomb, whereas the Vikingr have a galley engraven near the hilt of the sword.

In the neglected churchyard are some interesting old gravestones, one of which records how Sir Donald MacLeod of Berneray married his fourth wife when he was past eighty, and left a numerous family by her. There are various other stones worthy of note, but all so overgrown by nettles and brambles that it is almost impossible to find them. The brambles, however, bear a rich crop, and we feasted on ripe delicious blackberries, with small care concerning the soil whence they sprang.

In the afternoon we sailed for Tarbert in Harris—a necessary distinction, for Tarbert is a common name in the isles, and applicable to any strip of land lying between two waters, and so narrow that if necessary a boat can be drawn across. The word is contracted from "tarring," to draw, and "bata," a boat. By a strange quibble in certain old charters, lands that could be thus dealt with were included in the list of the isles, and thus it was that when Donald Bane of Scotland was compelled to cede to Magnus, the "bare-foot king" of Norway, all the

* Contributions in aid of these most patient but sorely-trying people will be thankfully received by the Convener of the Lewis Destitution Committee, at Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, or by Mr. Robert Adam, City Chamberlain, City Chambers, Edinburgh.

Western Isles, the cession was held to include all places that could be surrounded in a boat. So Magnus took his place in the stern of his boat, and was drawn across the narrow isthmus at the head of the Mull of Cantyre, and so took possession of it. Nor was his action exceptional, for not boats only, but often vessels of from nine to ten tons, were drawn by horses out of the west loch, and across the isthmus (a distance of about a mile) to the east loch, in order to avoid the stormy and dangerous sail round the peninsula.

The Tarbert of Harris is so narrow that less than five minutes' walk from our anchorage brought us to the shore on the other side of the isle. Much we marvelled at the primitive methods of cultivating the tiny fields—mere patches sprinkled over the face of morass and peat-moss wherever the soil seems to promise any response to the toil bestowed upon it.

We found that the little inn owned a dog-cart—a wonderful old trap, mended at all points, but still capable of carrying us without undue danger; so this we hired, and started on a long drive to the interior of the island. Our way lay through most beautiful scenery glorified by floods of sunshine, which gleamed on the yellow sands of Laskantyra, transforming them to fields of gold. Scarcely a ripple disturbed the broad surface of the calm ocean, which broke lazily on the shore in tiny wavelets, while the wild moorland revealed tints of golden-brown, and green, and purple, such as no one could deem possible who only saw such scenes on the dull, monotonously grey days so common to our northern skies.

We passed by the dark waters of the Bonaveta Loch, and halted in Glen Mevig to secure a rapid sketch of the grand hill which rises so precipitously from the head of the valley; then on to Fincastle, a modern castle* built on a site apparently selected as being the rockiest and noisiest that could be found in all the district. It is perched at the base of a rocky mountain, which rises just behind the castle, and it was necessary to blast the solid rock ere a level site could be secured for the foundations. The terrace in front of the windows is a great sea-wall, against which the wild waves dash, rarely ceasing from their turmoil for even a little season, while on either side of the castle lies a rocky ravine

down which rush noisy streams, hurrying to the sea. To the ear that rejoices in the stillness of a great calm, as the very ideal of bliss, such ceaseless sounds of tumultuous waters must, I think, be sorely trying. But it may be that what wearies the ear and brain of one man is music to his neighbour, especially if that neighbour is a keen fisher, to whom the tumbling and tossing waters suggest the silvery fish that play beneath their depths.

Ere we started to retrace our way to Tarbert the scene had utterly changed. Leaden-hued clouds rested on the summits of the dark hills, and soon rolled down their sides, shutting out the last gleam of sunlight. Then came the rain—no gentle summer showers, but pitiless sheets of drenching rain, falling in torrents, and hiding from us every trace of the beautiful scenery around, and falling without intermission till after midnight. Happily a good store of dry clothing awaited us in the yacht, and the weeping of night was forgotten when at dawn we awoke to the consciousness of another day of unclouded glory, such as seems to me never to shine so brightly as in these Western Isles.

We were much inclined to make our next expedition northward, to Lewis, calling at Stornoway, to see for ourselves how art and wealth combined have there triumphed over bleak Nature, in surrounding the modern castle with wonderful gardens, in which every rocky boulder is turned to picturesque account.

Fain, too, would we have sailed round the stormy Butt of Lewis, to visit the primitive people of Barvas, whose rude home-made pottery we had seen treasured in museums, and might very naturally have attributed to the Ancient Britons. And from Barvas we would have passed on to Loch Bernera, to see the Druidic remains at Callernish, where several concentric circles and also a semi-circular group of monoliths, with various tumuli and other rude stone monuments, remain to puzzle antiquaries with suggestions of the secrets of bygone ages.

But whatever temptations were offered by Lewis, a scene of more animated interest invited us southward, to North Uist, where a great cattle-market was to be held on the low flat shores of Loch Maddy—a strange sea-loch, to which the entrance is by a narrow opening, guarded, as it were, by two great masses of basalt, which jut up from the sea, and are remarkable as being the only basalt within

* Built by Lord Dunmore, but now the property of Sir Edward Scott.

many hours' sail. These are called Maddies, or watch-dogs. Hence the name of the sea-loch, which extends inland in every direction, its endless ramifications forming innumerable fiords, which intersect the land with the strangest network of waters. Some of these creeks run inland for fully nine miles, so that, although the loch only covers about ten square miles, its coast-line actually exceeds three hundred! It has been well compared to an outspread branch of dried sea-weed, whose countless stems and leaves represent the creeks and fiords that diverge in every direction.

In so strange a labyrinth of land and water, locomotion is indeed a difficult matter, for he who starts on foot finds that at every hundred yards he is stopped by a salt-water stream, while travelling by boat is even more slow and wearisome. Here and there, however, the creeks narrow so strangely that they are no wider than streams, and have accordingly been spanned by roughly-constructed bridges.

It was no easy matter to find a piece of sufficiently connected land to form a suitable site for the great cattle-market, and even that selected was a strangely-blended bit of land and sea. I doubt if any other spot could show so picturesque a cattle-fair.

In the first place, all the cattle had to be brought from neighbouring isles to this common centre, and, as each boat arrived, with its rich brown sails and living cargo of wild rough Highland cattle of all possible colours, the unloading was summarily accomplished by just throwing them overboard and leaving them to swim ashore.

These island beasties take kindly to the salt water, and seemed to rejoice in finding cool bathing-places on every side. All day long there were groups of them standing in the water or on the shore—such attractive combinations of rich warm colour, silvery-greys and reds, browns and blacks, rich sienna and pale sand-colour, all reflected in the pale aquamarine water. In the whole market there was not a beast that was not individually a study for an artist, with its wide-spreading horns, and rough shaggy coat, and its large, soft, heavily-fringed eyes, that seemed to look so wonderingly on the unwonted assemblage around them.

Besides the fishers' brown-sailed boats, several tiny white-winged yachts had brought customers to the market and added to the general stir—a stir which

must have so amazed the quiet seals and lone sea-birds, which are wont to claim these waters as their own.

An incredible number of islanders had assembled. It seemed a fair matter for wonder where they could all have come from, but a tidier, more respectable lot of people I have never seen. These people of North Uist—now, alas! like their neighbours, so sorely oppressed by downright famine—generally rank among the most prosperous of the Outer Islesmen, their patient industry being proverbial.

Most of the four thousand inhabitants of North Uist live on the further side of the isle, and had come across in the rudest of little carts, drawn by shaggy ponies, whose harness was the most primitive combination of bits of old rope, connected by twists of the strong wiry grass of the sand-hills ("bent," we call it on the east coast). Now the carts were tilted up, and watched over by wise collie-dogs, while the ponies were turned loose to graze on the heather. Indeed, the number of these was a noteworthy feature in the scene, for these rough little creatures find their own living on the moor, whence their owners must cut, and the ponies must carry, the peats which are the sole fuel of the isles.

Most fortunately for us all, the weather was glorious; indeed, the blazing sun, reflected by the still waters, made us long for shelter, but not a rock or a bush was there to break the monotony of the flat shore. The only morsels of shade lay beneath the few white booths set up by itinerant merchants, that lads and lasses might buy their fairings, and that the drovers might get their dram—the latter being a very important item in the day's pleasure, for the Blue Ribbon Army has not yet weaned the islesmen from their love of mountain-dew, and of the only two manufactories established in the isles, one is a good woollen factory at Portree, and the other is a distillery at Tallisker, in the Isle of Skye, which turns out forty-five thousand gallons of whisky per annum, of which about twenty thousand are consumed on the Isle of Skye itself.

Naturally, there was a liberal consumption of "the barley bree" at the market, but, the consumers being all hardened vessels, no one appeared any the worse, nor even any the livelier—liveliness, indeed, is by no means a characteristic of these gentle, quiet folk, most of whom seem to be naturally of a somewhat melancholy temperament.

The only sensible folk who had made provision against sun or rain were some wise old women, possessed of large bright blue umbrellas, beneath the shadow of which they sat on the parched grass. They were comfortably dressed in dark-blue homespun, with scarlet plaids and white mutches, and near them grazed several sand-coloured ponies, forming a pretty bit of colour. Behind them groups of bright, healthy-looking lads and lasses were assembled round the white booths, and all along the yellow shore faint wreaths of white smoke from the kelp-fires seemed to blend the blues of sea and sky; for the blessed boon of sunshine is too precious to be wasted even in a holiday to Loch Maddy Fair, and the kelp-burners dare not risk the loss of one sunny day. Here, in North Uist, the industry of kelp-burning is still continued—that toiling harvest, whose returns are now so small, and always so uncertain, that the men of Skye have altogether abandoned it. This difference is, however, partly due to the fact that the seaweed of Skye contains a much smaller proportion of the precious salts which give it value than does the weed on some other isles. For instance, in the Orkney group, the kelp is used in the manufacture of plate-glass, whereas that made in the Hebrides is only fit for soap.

They say “It’s an ill wind that blows no man good,” and, without referring to the precious driftwood and other treasures cast up by the sea after wild storms, the kelp-burners know that such tumults of ocean will assuredly bring them riches from the submarine forests, so they anxiously follow the tide-line to collect from among the masses of sea-ware every branch of the small brown tangle covered with little bladders, which yields the richest store of carbonate of soda, iodine, and other precious salts for which they toil. They pass carelessly by the broad fronds of brown wrack which strew the shore so thickly—those may help to manure the soil, but their search is chiefly for the one plant.

At low tides they go out to the furthest rocks to cut all that they can find growing on the rocks, such fresh weed being far more valuable than that which is cast up by the sea. This they collect in the creel which they carry on their shoulders; or accumulate in larger creels slung on either side of sturdy little ponies; and again and again they toil to and fro across the wet sands and slippery rocks, bearing their burden of heavy, wet weed to some safe spot above

high-water mark, where they spread it over the sand or grass, and leave it for several days to dry.

This is the most anxious stage in the kelp harvest, for one heavy shower of rain will wash away all the salts which give it value and leave only worthless weed. So the moment it is dried, the weed is collected in little heaps, like haycocks, and so remains till the moment when the furnace is ready to burn it.

The furnace or kiln is a large deep grave, lined with large stones. Over these is laid a thin covering of dry weed, and this is first patiently ignited, for it does not burn very readily, but needs careful kindling. Then a handful at a time is added till the grave is filled and heaped up, and the kelp becomes a semi-fluid mass, which is stirred incessantly with a long iron bar, a labour which must be continued for hours.

Very picturesque is such a group of workers, surrounded by their piles of dried brown weed, and half veiled by the volumes of white, opal smoke, with its pungent marine scent.

When all the tangle has been burnt, the kiln is allowed partially to cool, and the kelp is then cut into solid blocks of a dark bluish-grey material. These very soon become as hard and as heavy as iron, and are then ready for the market. From this material much carbonate of soda and various salts are obtained. But its most valued product is iodine, which is only to be obtained from the ash of dried seaweed, and is precious alike to the physician and the photographer. In former times the manufacture was highly remunerative, but the removal of the duty on Spanish barilla greatly decreased its value, which has further been diminished by the large amount of potass which is now imported. Moreover, it is now found that crude carbonate of soda, of better quality and cheaper, can be obtained from sea-salt. The iodine, however, is a comparatively recent discovery, and one which must give a renewed impetus to the kelp trade.

Kelp-making does not appear to have been one of the industries of the isles till about the middle of last century, when it became a distinctive feature, and so lucrative that some small farms paid their whole rent from the produce of the rocks. Thus it came to pass that the shores and rocks were sometimes let separately from the farms, and then the farmers were badly off indeed, having to go miles to collect the

necessary seaweed wherewith to manure their fields, sometimes carrying it in creels on their backs, or fetching it in boats from long distances across the stormy seas. When the value of kelp was at its height, several farms in the Orkneys actually rose in rental from forty pounds to three hundred pounds per annum, the Orkney kelp being particularly rich in salts.

It is singular how greatly the weed of different coasts varies in this respect. That of the Channel Isles is said to be richer in iodine than that of any other place. It is calculated that the Channel Islanders might easily manufacture ten thousand tons annually, which is as much as is now made in all the Western Isles. In Brittany and Normandy—where it is called varek—about twenty-five thousand tons per annum are produced.

The price of kelp has been subject to serious fluctuations, at one time falling as low as two pounds per ton, at another rising to twenty pounds. This high price was, however, of short duration, and only continued during a sudden failure in the supply of Spanish barilla. Now the price of kelp in the Hebrides averages about four pounds per ton, and when you consider that twenty-four tons of certain seaweeds must be collected, dried, and burnt, in order to produce one ton of kelp, you will readily perceive that the kelp-burners do not eat the bread of idleness.

Though I spoke just now of one particular seaweed being that which is most highly valued for this manufacture—namely, the bulbous golden-brown tangle, which fringes our rocks so luxuriantly—several sorts are highly esteemed, and yield salts in various proportions.

One ton of kelp should yield an average of about eight pounds of iodine, and certain quantities of chloride of sodium, chloride of potassium, carbonate of soda, etc. When subject to certain treatment and to distillation, it can also be made to yield two or three hundredweight of sulphate of ammonia and several gallons of naphtha, of paraffin oil, and of volatile oil.

We lingered for several hours amid the mingled throng of the islanders and their cattle, then stole away in a little boat to explore some of the winding fiords—never knowing how far inland we might penetrate, sometimes passing through a narrow shallow channel, and now floating dreamily into some deep wide lagoon, while overhead hovered a cloud of restless birds,

whose wild querulous cries alone broke the strange silence of these lonely shores, where oftentimes shy seals assembled; though these had been effectually scared for the present by the unwonted stir of the market. We paddled idly along, watching the glancing rays of sunlight and breathing honeyed fragrance of woodbine, which here and there trailed over some broken bank to the very edge of the water. All was glorified by the radiant light. Yet we could not but think how different must be the scene on a dull misty day or during the long spells of rainy weather, when these monotonous creeks are all discoloured by the mud washed down from the low dull shores, and all is dreary and desolate. There are indeed ranges of moorland which attain a height of seven hundred feet, but they are so shapeless as to lend no beauty to the scene.

As though the salt sea did not monopolise enough of the land, there are also numerous brackish lochs—so-called fresh water—some of which are studded with small islets, on which are the remains of ancient Pictish duns, circular forts of the rudest construction, which were connected with the land by stone causeways. There are about twenty of these in North Uist alone. These lochs have sedgy shores and are covered with white and yellow water-lilies, dear to radiant dragon-flies, which skim among the blossoms. The islanders, however, prize the lilies chiefly for the sake of their roots, which are used in dyeing wool. They also extract a rich brown dye from certain lichens which grow on the rocks, and a warm red from the common bramble, while heather yields a yellow dye. Another much-prized red dye is obtained from a kind of rue which grows on the sandy shores, but such is the danger of uprooting any kindly weed which helps to bind those light sands, that it is illegal to gather it.

Whereas the east coast of North Uist is all alike, dull boggy peat-moss, intersected with these creeks, which seem to wind about so aimlessly, the west coast is far more attractive, and offers possibilities of cultivation on a small scale. But all along the seaboard stretches a wide belt of white sands, called machars, which on calm sunny days have a beauty of their own, but which in windy weather are very dangerous neighbours; for on one wild night so much sand may drift inland as hopelessly to destroy the little fields on which so much toil has been expended.

These machars are partially overgrown by wiry bent-grass, which is most carefully preserved by the islanders, because it binds the sand with its network of long clinging roots, and eventually forms the groundwork for a thin crust of soil, on which grasses fit for pasturage may be cultivated. But there is always danger lest in years of scarcity the flocks may nibble these grasses too closely and so break this protecting surface, forming a little rent which the winds are certain to discover and very quickly enlarge, carrying the light sands inland for miles.

Fortunately the sand thus carried is not all destructive. The whitest sands are formed entirely of shells ground to powder by the ceaseless action of the waves—shells once brown or yellow, but now bleached by centuries of exposure to pitiless rains and blazing sun. Only a silvery sparkle remains to tell of the pearly things they once were. Of course such sand as this is pure lime, and forms a valuable manure. Some of the smaller isles are largely formed of broken shells, and I have landed on some where there was literally no shingle and no sands—literally nothing but a quarry of shells closely packed in countless millions. Above this strange deposit a light crust of earth has formed, and you can discern from afar where the shell-line is most abundant by the rich green of the grass and the fragrance of the sweet white clover, which here grows most abundantly.

While the very existence of the arable lands is thus in some districts endangered by the encroachments of the unfertile sand, there are other shores on which the sea has made stealthy inroads to such good purpose that broad tracts where once forests flourished now lie deep beneath the waves, as, for instance, round the green isle of Vallay, to the north of Uist, where at low tide traces of the ancient peat-moss and fine old trees are still to be seen lying below high-water mark. Now not a bit of moorland is to be seen nor any indication of timber, only green pastures and shallow fresh-water lochs, glorified by myriads of white and yellow water-lilies resting on their own glossy green leaves.

STEPHANOTIS.

"NAY, darling; nay, my bonny girl,
Set free each blossom-prisoned curl,
Lay those white clusters down;
Let silken snood with maiden grace
Hold back the ringlets from thy face,
But not that starry crown.

"Or let some simpler blossom twine
Upon thy forehead, daughter mine,
Blush-rose or lily white;
Or let a simple string of pearls
Gleam girlishly among thy curls,
Upon this festal night.

"But take those waxen blooms away,
Ah, darling! thoughts I cannot stay
Spring in my wakened heart;
Pass on, my sweetest, out of sight,
Take thou thy fill of young delight,
While I sit here apart."

I hear her flutter down the stair,
I hear the chariot wheels that bear
From me my peerless maid;
Now, wherefore should it wake to-night,
That ghost of dead-and-gone delight
I thought for ever laid?

The air is heavy with perfume,
Out-breathed from that white mass of bloom
My child laid gently down;
Ah me! an old-time sorrow stirs!
I see on curls as bright as hers
A stephanotis crown.

Across dark memory's time-worn track
A vision of that face comes back
That won my boyish heart;
My wife, the mother of my child,
What waves of sorrow wide and wild
Have set us twain apart?

Yet flesh of flesh, and bone of bone,
She was to me, beloved alone
Of all earth's womankind;
She ruled me with supreme command;
I put my honour in her hand,
Love made me wholly blind.

I kept her from the world apart,
I wore her in my inmost heart
A pure and perfect pearl;
Ah me! I doted over-much,
I never thought that shame could touch
The mother of my girl!

Eve 'scaped not sin in Paradise,
And shall her daughters be more wise?
The tale is common now;
Through flowery downward paths beguiled,
The mother wandered from her child,
The wife forgot her vow.

Yet on that night of bitter woe
She stayed to kiss her child, I know,
For by the little bed
I found a waxen-petalled flower,
Torn, haply, in that parting hour,
From her bright drooping head.

Now if the green grass waves above
Her grave, or if that guilty love
Still solaces her life,
I know not, I may never know,
Time cannot bridge the floods that flow
'Twixt me and my lost wife.

Peace, peace, my heart; be calm, be strong,
The child retrieves the mother's wrong,
Life holds new hopes for thee;
The white flowers perish in the flame—
So may the past with all its shame
Die evermore for me!

AN ALGERIAN LION STORY.

How I came to be sitting, in very good company, one glorious September evening, in the little moon-lighted garden of the hotel at Algiers is neither here nor there.

My companions about the round table, which was garnished with slim bottles, glasses, and piles of cigarettes, were all

Frenchmen—three old Algerian colonists, the fourth an ex-lieutenant of the navy, who had exchanged a life on the ocean wave for that of a hunter in three quarters of the globe.

Before dinner I had picked up in the salon Du Chaillu's gorilla-book, which I had never seen before, and my saying something about this turned the conversation in the garden upon wild beasts and the hunting of them.

Some wonderful stories were told, especially by the ex-sailor, though not a bit more wonderful than many one hears from old Indian sportsmen.

For the matter of that the most extraordinary sporting-story I ever heard was told by—of all men in the world—a hare-hunter, who capped therewith a snake-and-elephant narrative, quite unique of its kind.

Presently, a short silence, caused by the uncorking and tasting of a new bottle of Hermitage, was broken by the eldest of the party, who had not said much before. He was a good-looking man of fifty, with beard greyer than his head, and a merry twinkle in his eye. What he said I shall repeat for the sake of clearness in the first person, just as he told the story himself.

"The adventure of which I am going to tell you, gentlemen, happened to me a good many years ago. It was my first serious interview with a lion. Like most serious things it had a comic side too.

"I was a young man then, and had been some half-dozen years in Constantine, farming in partnership with a friend, an old colonist, whose acquaintance I made on board ship coming out from Marseilles.

"Our business was corn and cattle raising, and we did very well together, until my partner died of a fever, and after that I took a dislike to the place. I thought I would shift my ground into this province, Algiers, push towards the frontier, and get a grant of government land and make a farm of it. So, getting a neighbour to give an eye to things in my absence, I started on my prospecting expedition.

"I say I, but I should say we, for there were three of us, sworn comrades as ever were.

"First there was your humble servant; secondly there was my horse Marengo, and a better never looked through a bridle. He was bred between a Barb sire and an English mare belonging to the colonel of chasseurs of whom I bought him in town, when his regiment was going

home. He stood about fifteen hands two, carried the Barb head, and the rest of his body was all bone and muscle. His temper was as good as his courage was high; me he would follow about like a dog, but he had one failing, and that was an insuperable objection to the close proximity of anything, except one thing, that stood on four legs. We all have our peculiarities, and this was his. Bipedes were all very well, but multiply the legs by two, and he let fly immediately, and never missed his aim.

"Such was Marengo.

"Thirdly, there was Cognac, the faithfullest, the most honest, the oddest, and the wickedest little dog the world ever saw. He was more like a terrier than anything else, with a short yellow coat, a fox's head, very long ears, and a very short tail. The shrillness of his bark pierced your ears like a knife, but the awfulness of his howl—he always howled if left alone—baffles description. During the fourteen years I had him, he seldom left me day or night. On a journey he would run beside, and when tired get up and sit in my wallet. The great pleasure of his life was to steal behind people and secretly bite their legs.

"By some mysterious affinity, he and Marengo were friends from the first. They now sleep under the same tree.

"Well, we started, and after going over a good deal of ground, I thought I had decided on a location, and turned my face homewards. My direction was by Alma, to strike the great road that runs under the Atlas eastwards into Constantine.

"It was about eight o'clock one morning, when I had been some two hours in the saddle, that I emerged from a narrow valley, or ravine, through which the road ran, on to a sandy plain dotted with bushes and scrub.

"I had just laid the reins on Marengo's neck, when suddenly he gave a tremendous shy that pitched me clean off.

"The next minute, with a horrible roar, a lion sprang right at his head.

"I made sure he was on the top of him, and so he would have been, but as Marengo wheeled short round like lightning on his hind legs, the streaming reins caught the brute's fore-paw, and as it were tripped him, so that he fell sideways on the road.

"The heavy jerk nearly brought the horse down, but the throat-lash broke, the bridle was pulled over his ears, and,

recovering himself, he darted away among a grove of trees that stood by the way-side.

"So intent was the lion on the horse, that he paid no attention to me lying defenceless before him.

"Crawling swiftly along the ground, he pursued Marengo, whom I gave up for lost—for his chance against the lithe brute among the trees seemed hopeless.

"However, as luck would have it, there was an open space about a dozen yards across. In the centre of this Marengo took his stand, with his tail towards the lion and his head turned sharply back over his shoulder, watching him.

"He stood quite still, except for the slight shifting of his hind feet and lifting of his quarters, which I knew meant mischief.

"The lion probably thought so too, for he kept dodging to try and take his opponent by a flank movement. But the old horse knew his game, and pivoting on his fore-legs still brought his stern guns to bear on the enemy.

"Soon with a roar the lion made his spring, but Marengo lashed out both heels together, with such excellent judgment of time and distance, that catching him full in the chest he knocked him all of a heap to the ground, where he lay motionless. Then with a neigh of triumph and a flourish of his heels away he galloped through the grove out on to the plain and was safe.

"The lion lay so still that I thought he was dead, or at any rate quite hors de combat, and was just running to pick up the bridle and follow Marengo, when he sat up on his haunches. This made me stop.

"As he sat there with his head loosely wagging from side to side, and mouth half-open, he looked quite vacant and idiotic.

"Suddenly his head stopped wagging, he pricked his ears, and by the flash of his eye and changed expression, I knew he had seen me.

"Only one thing was to be done, and I did it. The outermost tree was large and low-branched. To it I ran and up it I scrambled, and had just perched in a fork about fifteen feet above terra-firma, as the lion arrived at the bottom.

"Looking up at me with two red-hot coals for eyes, his long nervous tail lashing his sides, every hair on his body turned to wire, and his great claws protruded, he chattered at me as a cat chatters at a bird out of reach. His jaws snapped like a steel trap, and his look was perfectly dia-

bolical. When he was tired of chattering he stood and growled.

"Catching sight of the bridle, he walked to it, smelled it, patted it, and then came back and lay down and glared at me.

"My carbine—confound it!—was slung at my saddle. My only weapon, beside my hanger, was a pocket-pistol, double-barrelled, and what in those days we called a breechloader, that is, the barrels unscrewed to load, and then screwed on again.

"It would have been a handy weapon against a man at close quarters, for it threw a good ball—but for a lion! Besides, the beast was too far off.

"Then the thought flashed into my mind, where was Cognac?

"I supposed he had run away and hidden somewhere. If the lion got sight of him, it would, I knew, be soon all over with the poor little fellow.

"All at once there arose, close at hand, an awful and familiar yell. It had a strange muffled tone, but there was no mistaking Cognac's voice.

"Again it came, resonant, long-drawn, and sepulchral. It seemed to come from inside the tree. Where the deuce was he?

"The lion appeared utterly astonished and turned his ears so far back to listen that they were almost inside out, when from some hole among the roots of the tree there popped a small yellow head, with long ears.

"Down, down, Cognac! I cried in my agony; 'go back, sir!'

"A cry of delight, cut short by a piteous whine, was his reply, as he spied me, and then dashing fully a yard towards the lion, he barked defiantly.

"With a low growl and ruffling mane, the beast charged at the little dog.

"Back went Cognac into his cave as quick as a rabbit, and stormed at him from inside.

"Thrusting his great paw right down the hole, the lion tried to claw him out. Oh, how I trembled for Cognac!

"But he kept up such a ceaseless fire of snapping and snarling that it was plain he was either well round a corner or that the hole was deep enough for his safety.

"All the same, to see the great cowardly beast digging away at my poor little dog like that was more than I could stand. Cocking my pistol, I shouted, and as he looked up I fired at his blood-shot eye. He shook his head, and I gave him the other barrel.

"With a scream of rage he bounded back.

"Cognac immediately shot forth his head and insulted him with jeering barks.

"But he was not to be drawn again, and after a bit he lay down further off and pretended to go to sleep. Cognac barked at him till he was tired, and then retired into his castle.

"Reloading, I found I had only three bullets left, and concluded to reserve them for a crisis.

"It was now past noon. To beguile the time, I smoked a pipe or two, sang a song, and cut my name, Cognac's, and Marengo's on the tree, leaving a space for the lion's, which I determined should be Wellington.

"I wished he would go away.

"Having some milk in my bottle, I took a drink, and should have liked to have given some to Cognac.

"The lion began to pant, with his red thorny tongue hanging a foot out of his mouth. He was a mangy and disreputable-looking brute as ever I saw.

"By-and-by he got up and snuffed the air all round him, and then, without as much as looking at me, walked off and went deliberately down the road.

"Slipping to the ground I caught up Cognac, who had crept out directly, and, after looking carefully round for the lion, was smothering me with caresses. The lion was turning towards a bushy clump in a hollow about two hundred yards off. That light green foliage—willows, water! Had the cunning brute sniffed it out?

"Anyhow it was a relief to stretch one's legs after sitting six mortal hours on a branch. The lion disappeared round the bushes. I strained my eyes over the plain, but could see nothing moving. Then I gave Cognac a drink of milk and a few bits of bread-cake, for which he was very grateful. Of course it was no use beginning a race against a lion with only two hundred yards start in any number of miles. The tree was better than that.

"All the same he was a long time; perhaps he was really gone for good. Bah! there came his ugly head round the corner again, making straight for us.

"When he was pretty near I kissed Cognac, and threw a bit more cake into the hole. Then I climbed again to my perch, Cognac retired growling into his fortress, and the beast of a lion mounted guard over us as before.

"He looked quite cool and comfortable, and had evidently had a good drink.

"Another hour, and he was still there.

"Whilst I was wondering how long he

really meant to stay, and if I was destined to spend all night on a bough like a monkey, and on very short commons, he got up, and walking quietly to the foot of the tree, without uttering a sound, sprang up at me with all his might.

"He was quite a yard short, but I was so startled that I nearly lost my balance.

"His coup having failed, he lay down right under the branch I was on, couching his head on his paws as if to hide his mortification.

"Suddenly the thought came into my mind: Why not make a devil and drop it on his back? I dismissed it as ridiculous, but it came again. As we have all, including our English friend here, been boys, you know what I mean—not a fallen angel, but the gunpowder devil.

"Good! Well, it seemed feasible—I would try it.

"I had plenty of powder in my little flask, so pouring some into my hand I moistened it well with spittle and kneaded away until it came out a tiny Vesuvius of black paste. Then I formed the little crater, which I filled with a few grains of dry powder, and set it carefully on the branch.

"My hands shook so with excitement I could hardly hold the flint and steel, but I struck and struck—the tinder ignited—now, Vesuvius!

"Whiff, whizz! The lion looked up directly, but I dropped it plump on the back of his neck. For an instant he did not seem to know what had happened; then with an angry growl up he jumped and tore savagely at the big fiery flea on his back, which sent a shower of sparks into his mouth and nose.

"Again and again he tried, and then raved wildly about, using the most horrible leonine language, and no wonder, for the devil had worked well down among his greasy hair, and must have stung him like a hundred hornets. His back hair and mane burst into a flame, and he shrieked with rage and terror.

"Then he went stark staring mad, clapped his tail between his legs, laid back his ears, and rushed out of the grove at twenty miles an hour, and disappeared up the ravine.

"Almost as mad as the lion with joy, and feeling sure he was gone for good, I tumbled down the tree and ran off along the road as hard as I could, with Cognac barking at my heels. By-and-by I had

to pull up, for the sun was still very hot, but I walked as fast as I could, looking out all the time for Marengo, who would not, I knew, go very far from his master. Presently I spied him in a hollow. A whistle, and whinnying with delight he trotted up and laid his head on my shoulder.

"In my hurry I had forgotten the bridle, but with my belt and handkerchief I extemporised a halter, tied one end round his nose, and catching up Cognac, mounted, and galloped off, defying all the lions in Africa to catch me.

"There were still two hours before sunset to reach the next village, and by hard riding I did it. That we all three of us enjoyed our suppers goes without saying. And that, gentlemen, is my story."

We agreed it was wonderful.

TRADES' GUILDS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

IN THREE PARTS. PART III.

In the year 1711 there was published in London by Thomas Overton, a folio volume entitled, *The Cries of the City of London drawn after the Life (with Explanations in English, French, and Italian)*, drawn by M. Lamrom and engraved by P. Tempest and J. Savage. This volume contained seventy-four plates, and I strongly recommend any intending visitor to Constantinople who has leisure for the task, to consult this book before he starts on his journey. There was a less pretentious book on London Cries, rather more than fifty years ago, which I well remember. It also had plates and might be useful. For Constantinople and the Banlieue form the very Paradise of hawkers, and pedlars, and journeymen, and their cries go up all the day long, like a hymn of petty industry. Almost all the small trade of the place is in the hands of the hawkers and pedlars. A prodigious variety of articles is sold by them; and the articles which they sell are, of their kind, quite as good as those which you can get in the shops, Linen and calico, merceries of all kinds, candles, soap, stockings, slippers, carpets, fezzes, cloth, shawls, mats, lanterns, umbrellas, pipes and mouth-pieces, stationery, pins, needles, buttons, thread and cotton, vests, drawers, and handkerchiefs, are all vended in the streets by hawkers. It is needless to add that the streets abound with hawkers of cakes, fruits, and sweetmeats of all kinds. These worthies usually

place the tray which contains their wares on a light three-legged table, which they carry on their heads until they have reached a satisfactory "pitch" for their operations. Von Moltke relates that when in 1837 he was surveying Constantinople and the Banlieue, in order that he might make a map for Sultan Mahmoud (which is still the best map of the city extant), his apparatus caused him to be taken for a vendor of sweetmeats, and the women and children came round him to purchase his wares. When they were told that he was making a map for the sultan, they laughed derisively, and said that the sultan did not want a map, as he already knew more of Stamboul than he could learn from it. This might be true of Sultan Mahmoud, who was by way of being a sort of Haroun Alraschid, but I question if Abdul Hamid the Second knows as much of the greater part of his capital as the natives of the Land's End and John o' Groat's House know of Cheapside.

The villages on the Bosphorus, which are but poorly provided with shops, and which when they have them, find them to be of the most inferior kind, would be very badly off if it were not for the hawkers and pedlars, who walk out from town with their bales, and vend their goods from door to door. The task is one not unattended with danger, for the country is everywhere unsettled and unguarded, and robbery with violence is of frequent occurrence. Only three years ago a party of eight Greek pedlars, who were making their way through the villages on the European shore of the Black Sea, were set upon by the ferocious natives, and plundered and murdered to a man. Their graves are still visible among the bay-trees and scrub which fringe the coast, but no one has been punished or even arrested for the crime.

The itinerant craftsmen of various kinds are also numerous and useful in town and country. The householder may have his chairs and other furniture, his pots and pans, his umbrellas, his boots and shoes, and even his clothes and his china mended in his own house or at his own doorstep by these excellent craftsmen. The typical mender of chairs in London Cries, who used to say:

"Old chairs to mend! Old chairs to mend!
If I'd as much money as I could spend
I'd leave off crying old chairs to mend!"

has many an imitator with like aspirations in the Constantinople of to-day.

Another curious feature in the street life of Constantinople and the Banlieue is exhibited by the saraffs or money-changers, who pervade all the principal streets and villages, and are absolutely indispensable to the retail trade and social requirements of Constantinople. The tables of the money-changers are usually located under an archway, or in a doorway, or perhaps in a snug and quiet corner of a shop, primarily devoted to other purposes. The saraff sits by his table, having before him a rectangular case with a glazed lid, through which may be seen coins and paper-money of almost every nation under heaven. For Constantinople is a sort of monetary Babel, the workmen whereof have been smitten with a confusion of coins. At the present moment the Turks have six kinds of money in circulation, to wit, gold, silver, bechlik, metallic, copper, and caïmés, which of course is paper. I do not wish to overload this article with too many details, and shall content myself with saying that at the present moment one hundred piastres in gold will purchase one hundred and eight in silver, or two hundred and ten in bechlik, or two hundred and six in metallic, or six hundred and ten in copper, or eight hundred and ninety piastres in paper. My readers will perceive that these differences, with their daily occurring variations, offer fine opportunities to the talented and enterprising money-changer. But this is not all. Constantinople is a cosmopolitan city, and all kinds of foreign coins circulate within it. The local journals, in their daily price-list, quote the value in Turkish money of the English sovereign, the napoleon, the Austrian ducat, the Russian imperial pol, and the paper rouble. But these quotations give a very imperfect idea of the varieties of money which circulate here. Some of the coins have been floating about for nearly a century, and there is abundant scope for the foundation of an historical collection. Coins of Naples, of the Papal States, of United Italy, of Greece, of Roumania, Servia, and Bulgaria may be found, mingled with rupees from the East, and dollars from the West. It was said of the celebrated Evelyn that he possessed a large collection of ancient coins, and also a sufficiency of coins of modern date. If any one will send me a "sufficiency" of modern coins I will secure to him an ample stock of older issues which shall be conspicuous for their variety. For the Turks have certainly been "to a feast of currencies and have brought away the scraps."

The vocation of a saraff is not without its perils. As, after the day's labour, they wend their way homewards, carrying with them their stock-in-trade, they are often dogged and plundered, and sometimes murdered.

In the villages in the Banlieue of Constantinople a thriving business is done, in the open air, in the distillation of brandy and mastic, and in the manufacture of wine. The wine is, for the most part, made from quinces. The brandy and mastic are made from refuse grapes, the mastic being flavoured with some of the real spirit, to give it an appearance of genuineness. As a matter of course, this industry cannot commence until the autumn has set in; but, then, locomotive distillers and makers of wine pervade the villages on the European shore of the Bosphorus, and ply their trades. I have often watched them, and have been especially amused with the cumbrous and very primitive form of still which is used by the distillers. It is the custom of the distillers and wine-makers to take up their stations in front of one of the many cafés or wine-shops with which the Greek villages abound. When they have supplied this wine-shop with as much wine or spirit as the proprietor requires, they move on to another, and once more light their fires and set up their stills.

In contradiction to the labours of the distillers and the wine-makers are those of the water-bearers, who do their best to remedy the deficiencies in the water supply of Constantinople, which, though it was once of the first order, is now lamentably defective, the modern Turkish Government having allowed the great works of past times to fall into absolute ruin. The water-bearers are of two kinds, viz.: those who distribute the ordinary water, for culinary purposes or for purposes of ablution, from house to house, and those who bring the finest drinking-water over in casks from the Asiatic shore. The sacs in which the water is carried about are of leather; but water and other liquids are also conveyed from place to place in pig-skins, which preserve the original form of the entire animal.

Amongst the institutions which the Turks inherited from the Byzantines are the guilds, which by the Byzantines were called "suntekniai," and by the Turks are called "esnafs." I have observed that societies of this kind have a strong propensity to claim for themselves a high

antiquity. I remember that it was once my duty to examine the rules of the Free Gardeners of Haddingtonshire. The preface to the rules contained the following passage: "Free gardenery commenced in that delightful Paradise which was inhabited by our first parents." No further mention of the early history of the Free Gardeners was vouchsafed, but the preface went on to state: "About the year 1740 (A.D.), some energetic gardeners in Haddingtonshire formed this society." But it is incontestable that the craftsmen's guilds of Constantinople have an antiquity to which no burgher guild—and, à fortiori, no craftsmen's guild—in England or the Low Countries, or Belgium, can lay claim.

The craftsmen's guilds in Constantinople existed some centuries before the land-owners and house-owners in the English towns had begun to form burgher guilds as a barrier against the Saxon and Norman kings. As a matter of course, they had existed very much longer—some centuries longer—before the craftsmen of the English towns began to form themselves into guilds to resist the oppression of the burgher guilds. There are some twenty or thirty craftsmen's guilds in Constantinople which had existed three or four centuries before the Corporation of London was established. There are some more, which came into existence afterwards, but long before the craftsmen's guilds of England in the reigns of the Henrys and the Edwards had broken out into revolt against the burgher guilds or corporations, and secured their own liberties and their own immunities. Some writers have imagined that within the despotism of the Roman Empire there was a socialism which exhibited itself in the establishment of colleges or guilds for the workmen, and which made labour free. Certain it is that, from the sixth century, in the Lower Empire labour has been free. In Salonica there was, before the time of Justinian, a large workman's college or *khan*, in which all kinds of craftsmen were congregated under some co-operative rule. At the same period there were in Constantinople a guild of the paper-makers, a guild of the rope-makers, a guild of the divers, a guild of the fishermen, a guild of the ship-builders, and a guild of the mariners. All these guilds, and more, are with us still.

In Sir Henry Taylor's play of Philip van Artevelde, the Deacon of the Mariners says that "the Arteveldees were made of

the stuff that mariners make storm stay-sails of." I do not think that any deacon of the mariners, in our day, will say as much for any Turkish pasha. It is to be said on behalf of the craftsmen's guilds of Byzantium and Stamboul that no one craft sought to erect itself over the others. Mindful of their origin, they clung to equality.

In London, we have twelve livery companies, and a number of smaller guilds. In Italy, there were, or are, seven higher arts, and a number of "lower arts." Boccaccio (I take this from Selden) "has this passage of Souldiers: They came to Apollo to have their profession made the eighth liberal science, which he granted. As soon as it was noised up and down, it came to the butchers, and they desired their profession might be made the ninth. For, said they, the soldiers have this honour for the killing of men; now we kill as well as they; but we kill beasts for the preserving of men, and why should not we have honour done to us also? Apollo could not answer their reasons, so he reversed his sentence, and made the soldiers trade a 'mystery,' as that of the butchers is." This is a pleasantry, and I merely quote it to show what were the feuds amongst the craftsmen's guilds in Italy. In Constantinople there were no such feuds.

It is evident that the guilds, or *esnafs*, as they are called, of Constantinople, may not only claim a most distinguished antiquity, but may also claim to have preserved labour free against imperialism, feudalism, and Oriental despotism. Coming down to us, as they do, from the time when the Roman Empire was in full vigour, and through the decadence of the Lower Empire, they have yet been able to impress themselves upon the debased civilisation of the Ottoman Empire, and to maintain almost the status which they possessed when they were first created. They are sorely tried by the pressure of modern political economy, and are threatened with gradual decay; but when I think that the ancient Corporation of London, which came into existence so long after they did, is also threatened with immediate extinction, I cannot be surprised.

There were, in the time of Justinian, at least thirty-one of these guilds; at the present time, according to a very recent authority, and in spite of Turkish rule, there are two hundred and fifty-five guilds and their branches. It is remarkable that

institutions purely socialistic, which have lived through two despotisms, should be vigorous and flourishing under a third. These institutions are open to workers in the same trade, without reference to race or religion. They are, almost all, composed indifferently of Moslems and Christians. Each is composed of masters, workmen, and apprentices, and is governed by a council, the members of which are elected by the masters and workmen. The apprentices, according to their conduct, can rise to be workmen, and afterwards to be masters. The kehaya (treasurer) is always a Mussulman, but the president of the council, and the other members of it, may be either Moslems or Christians, according to the will of their constituents. To guard against embezzlement of the funds, the official seal of the guild is divided into four parts, of which one is held by the kehaya, and the rest by three members of the council. All the four portions must be affixed to every official document.

Some of these guilds are very large; for instance, the esnaf of stone-cutters has one thousand members, of whom six hundred are Greeks and Armenians, while the rest are Moslems. The binders' guild boasts of having been founded by Sultan Bajazet. The Christian members of the guilds are under the protection of their patron saints; for instance, the bakals (grocers) look to St. Nicholas, the furriers to the prophet Elias, the barbers and blood-letters to Saint Pantemon, and the water-bearers to the Forty Martyrs. As all these saints were chiefly in reverence in Byzantine times, their selection is a good evidence of the antiquity of the guilds.

On the other hand, there are lower steps in the scale. There is a guild of the boyardjis, or dyers; but I think that this guild must have seen its best days, for I have noticed of late that the street shoe-blacks, who used to content themselves with the humble name of lustradji, now call themselves boyardjis, or dyers. However, perhaps the latter name is the more suitable for them, for they certainly did not polish, and they do blacken.

The members of the guilds are true to "Labour," and in their defence of it, rise superior to any differences of creed. Four years ago, the wool-sorters, who are a medley association of Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, organised a strike against the wool-staplers, by whom they conceived themselves to be aggrieved, and they

gained the day. The wool-staplers, who should have known better, fancied that the religious differences of their employes would prevent a combination, but the labourers were true to their craft, and the wool-staplers had to choose between submission and the loss of the market.

The guilds have suffered greatly from two circumstances; first, from the depreciation in the value of Turkish and Roumelian Bonds, in which many of them had invested a great part of their savings, and, next, from the capitulations, which have broken down their special privileges, and enabled a crowd of non-members to compete with them. During their power they certainly did much good. The members banded themselves together for the security of their lives and property; they carefully educated the apprentices; provided for the wants of the sick and needy; and gave pensions to aged members or to destitute widows. In short, they did, under difficult circumstances, what the great London corporations were formed to accomplish. I shall be sorry when they disappear altogether. I must make exception, however, in one case. There is actually a guild of beggars (dilendji), having a form of government similar to that of all the other guilds, the kehaya included. The formation of a beggar's guild, however, is no deviation from mediæval practice.

Your readers will perceive that a careful study of the institutions of Constantinople would well repay residents and visitors. Occasionally some earnest man makes the required study; but, as a rule, the higher classes are content to look with lack-lustre eye upon the fading institutions of the country, and to witness with indifference the slow but certain passing away of the last relics of customs and associations which once prevailed throughout the whole of Europe.

If the tourist be unaccompanied by a dragoman (whose presence is absolutely unnecessary) he may enjoy many a pleasant stroll in the old part of Stamboul. If he have a reasonable acquaintance with the history of the place, he may, by the study of a good map, inform himself of the general arrangement of the city and its principal bearings. He may even plunge into it with perfect security, and be sure that he will not lose his way.

The older quarters of the city are the most pleasant; there, the houses as they rise skywards, advance to meet each other from opposite sides of the street, and many

an amorous denizen of an attic might press the hand of his mistress on the opposite side of the way, if the gratings, which recall the zelosias of Calderon and Lope de Vega, did not enviously bar the way through all the windows which look upon the streets. The apartments in the private dwelling-houses derive their light for the most part from a central court, which is rarely without its fountain or its draw-well, its clustering vines and its spreading fig-trees. In many streets the vines are carried across from house to house on lines or poles, and when in the fierce light of a summer sun, the quaint forms and varied colours of the houses are seen through a leafy screen, the tourist forgets, for a time, the horrors of the pavement, and finds a beauty even in the crazy and fast decaying buildings which surround him.

On the outskirts of the city, and in the great moat which skirts the old walls, the time-honoured shadow still creaks and turns its ponderous bulk, as it did before the Pyramids were built. The moat, which is of great extent, is filled with well-kept market-gardens, and the hills and valleys in the immediate vicinity are tilled by skilful gardeners, who want nothing but good government to be happy, and even wealthy. Oxen are largely employed for draught and for the plough. I have seen a man "ploughing with six yoke of oxen." The yoke, either for oxen or buffaloes, of whom there are a few, is of the most primitive pattern, and all the animals wear frontlets to avert the evil eye.

Kites build their nests in the ruined walls and towers, and, when the streets are still, fight with the street dogs for the garbage. Storks revisit us in due season, and swallows come back regularly to their nests, even though those nests be within the dwelling-houses. Quails come here in vast numbers in spring and autumn, and I have known them to be so weary with their journey as to fall down in the streets of Pera, and be taken by the hand.

Constantinople should be carefully visited before the old order has entirely given way to the new. Many a sexagenarian tourist, anxious for something to brighten up his declining days, might take to himself the words which Mr. Hughes put into the mouth of Eumenes in the final scene of the play of *The Siege of Damascus*:

Constantinople is my last retreat!
If Heaven indulge my wish, there I'm resolved
To wear out the dark winter of my life!
An old man's stock of days—I hope not many.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III.

CHAPTER IX. NURSE PRETTYMAN.

As a calm and beauteous dawn succeeds a night of storm and tempest, so had the birth and growth of Ralph's love for Hilda Devenant broken in upon the darkness of his night desolation. Just (so it had seemed) when the burden of life was heaviest, and a hand most needed to help him to bear it, a womanly palm had met his with soft yet steadfast clasp. Hilda—not the Hilda he had left, but a new Hilda, gravely sweet, a woman grown—stepped into his life from under the shadow of the budding clematis, came to him singing with unconsciously prophetic lips, of the love that cannot fail, or be hidden away, or set aside.

Like many of us, Ralph had imagined himself to be fording the deep water-floods of sorrow when his feet had but touched the edge of the stream. Which of us have not said to our own hearts: "Surely, this is the worst that can befall!" when, all the while our sorrow was but as "a cloud the size of a man's hand," compared with that utter darkness which should presently fall upon us?

That his "pretty mother," that picture, not deeply graven on his life, but put in in fair faint colours, and dear in its own way, should have faded into nothing more than a memory during his absence, would alone have cast a shadow on Ralph's home-coming. She had often tried him with her fretful childish ways; but he had been proud of her fragile beauty and that air of gentle breeding that surrounded her like an atmosphere. He would have missed her sorely.

But this possible grief had been engulfed, as a lesser thing by an immeasurably greater; had been hidden away and masked by the swift, sharp agony of his father's death. In it not only lay the bitter sense of irreparable loss, but the gnawing pain of a cruel regret. Geoffrey Stirling had believed his only son to be dead; had died, slain by the shock of that supposed bereavement. True, the exaltation and the delirium of approaching dissolution had led him to speak of the dead as still living; but underlying this was the horrible fact that the man had died of a broken heart.

The mark of that sorrow lived through—in addition to the many physical hardships

endured after the wreck of the Aladdin — was upon Ralph Stirling. Ten years seemed to have been added to his life in less than one. There were lines of thought and care upon his face, and on either temple when the dark locks were raised, among them shone a silver thread or two.

How had he not suffered for his father's sake, in the long dreary hours upon that desert island in the pitiless ocean, when the sullen lapping of the waves against the rocks seemed to beat in his own maddened brain! How had he not oftentimes cast himself upon his knees upon the hard stone, stretching forth trembling hands across the wilderness of grey, white-flecked water, while the tears had coursed down his haggard cheeks as he thought of what one loving heart would suffer, listening to the story of the ill-fated Aladdin!

The fears that had beset him, when, cold and hungry, he stood face to face with death from exposure and privation, yet hardly felt his peril, had been more than realised. Geoffrey, his father, had died of grief.

What cup of bitterness more bitter could fate put to his lips?

And yet consolation came. Human sympathy — that most exquisite balm of Gilead — healed the poignant smart. Ralph's sorrow was not forgotten, but it was assuaged. His father's memory was not less dear; his father's lonely death — lonely for lack of him — was not a less sad recollection; but there were two to bear the burden of all things, two to share the sorrow and to feel the pity of it all — himself and the woman who loved him.

Scarcely a thought of his heart upon that saddest of all themes had he kept from Hilda. Never once had her tender sympathy failed him.

In imagination she had walked through the silent rooms of the house that called her lover master; had seen the empty chair; had handled the books, with here a page turned down, and there a pencil-mark on the margin — traces left by a dead hand. In the very telling of such a tale lies the grace of comfort, and Ralph had sought this consolation many times.

As the summer grew to fulness, so grew the measure of his sweet content. Hope blossomed with the roses. The sadness was in his heart still, but it lay in a grave overgrown with flowers. It was a sadness that could never die out of his life — (who can bury their dead so deep that no whisper shall come from lips that are

dust?) — but yet a sadness that should in time become more of a fireside companion than a shunned and dreaded thing; a sadness that he and Hilda, in the days to come, should speak of together — maybe speak of to their children, with hushed and reverent voices, as we speak of the precious unforgotten dead.

So the sorrow had grown a part of the music of life, falling into unison with the rest, as the plaintive minor chord adds to the perfection and beauty of the whole harmony.

But now — with what a horrible crash and din had life been rent and torn to tatters! The hopes that had blossomed with the roses were like those queenly flowers, when every perfumed petal is shed and lies trodden under foot.

Was this man, who, with despairing eyes and stricken white face, hurried wildly along through the night, in very truth he who had passed by the same way but a few hours before, half smiling as he went, tasting the sweetness of his darling's greeting in a happy anticipation, thinking, as he walked, "So will she look," "so will she smile," "so, meeting mine, will the gladness deepen in her eyes"?

Most unlike this happy lover was Ralph now as he hurried on.

The beauty of the night, seen through the haggard misery of his own eyes, seemed to mock him, hedging him in, stifling him on every side with something in which he had neither part nor lot.

Death, terrible as it is, pales before dishonour. Through what travail of soul did Ralph bring himself to look upon even the barest possibility of his father's life having been a mere counterfeit — a thing outwardly beautiful, rotten within!

"It cannot be. I will not think of it as holding even a shadow of truth. I will cast it from me as I would some noisome creeping thing."

Thus, in riotous rebellion against the burden laid upon him, thoughts tossed and tumbled in his troubled mind. Then a softer sorrow grew. If this horrible thing might be true, how must that noble nature — noble still, though mired and distorted by so cruel a fall — have suffered!

"All through the long and weary years." Those were his words then; that was the plaint wrung at last from the set and resolute lips. And he sent his only son — the son who was to him beyond expression dear — away from sight and hearing; not from any want of love — not that, not that

—but because, where love is deep and tender, confidence is hard to withhold, and in some unguarded, some torturing moment, the ugly secret might have oozed out into the light of day.

Ralph was ready to curse himself for thus setting Hester's accusation before his mind as a thing substantial and real, and yet——

There was facing him the inward conviction that what she had dared to clothe in words was a living fact, not a mere lay-figure dressed up to masquerade as the instrument of a blind vengeance.

A hundred little things, not much thought of at the time, hardly noted, indeed—tricks of look and manner, quick glances of suspicion where none were called for, tender words, pleading in their tenderness—started to Ralph's memory, asserting themselves with vivid power, and all pointing the same way—all crying out as so many accusing witnesses: "He was a man with a burden on his conscience—he was a man with a past on which he feared to look!"

"If it was done, then was it done for me," came as the next searing thought.

At this a sob rose in Ralph's throat, choking him.

He was under the dark shadow of the yew-trees in the avenue, nearing the house which had seemed to him already desolate, but now took the guise of a place haunted by the restless spirit of a suffering, sin-stained man.

What terrible vigils had taken place in that room, of which the window even now showed palely shining under the sweeping branches of the giant yew! What torturing thoughts had maddened a sleepless brain, as the ivy tapped against the pane and the wind moaned in the boughs overhead!

Conscious that such piteous imaginings are enervating, and that never had life called upon him so loudly to buckle on his strongest armour of manhood and face a duty stern and implacable, Ralph hastened his steps, and soon the deep clang of the hall-bell rang through the silent house, followed by poor old Gaylad's feeble bark. The man who opened the door fell back a step on seeing his master, white and wan—"for all the world as if he'd met that dratted ghost as folks said was laid this long while back," as he remarked on his return to the servants'-hall.

"Is the master ill?" said Nurse Prettyman, looking up from her knitting and

over her spectacles, and keeping the shining pins motionless as she spoke.

"He looks skeered-like," replied the man, "and like as if he couldn't see an inch before him."

Nurse Prettyman knitted on, but her hands trembled so that every line had to be ultimately unravelled—a unique occasion in the life of a workwoman so skilled with "the pins" as to be looked upon as a household oracle in the matter of toes, heels, and "turning."

Meanwhile Ralph Stirling had betaken himself to that room, now, henceforth, and for ever to be peopled for him by ghostly shapes of horror.

As he entered, he seemed to see, shadowy in the soft light of the candles that burned in high sconces on either side the mantel, a gaunt figure gathered over the fire; dark, restless eyes flashing from under overhanging brows, a hand nervously tossing back grey-lined locks from hollow temple and high and noble brow.

For him the empty chair by the ingle-nook was not without its shadowy occupant to-night.

Gaylad, too, as though subtly conscious of a haunting presence, whined as he lay upon the silky rug, his muzzle turned, his dim and wistful eyes raised to that empty place.

Twice—with folded arms and head dropped upon his breast—Ralph paced the room from end to end.

Upon what terrible quest was he about to enter? Whither would the dark and unknown pathway, in which he had but as yet taken one or two faltering steps, lead him? That unfinished message, spoken by dying lips, what—what of that?

"Tell him to make—reparation!"

We can make reparation to the living. The dead are beyond such tender grace.

What, then, of Gabriel Devenant?

Many times and oft had Ralph heard the story of the bank robbery, from no one more in detail than from poor unconscious Davey.

Many of the sufferers could, even now, be recompensed.

But what of Hester, widowed? What of Hilda, bereaved of her father—her young life overshadowed by the memory of his tragical death, her young heart saddened by the memory of his sufferings?

Every innocent word that Hilda had babbled of the father she had loved and lost, now came home to the mind of the

man who loved her, as barbed arrows piercing to the marrow of his bones.

He knew not the story of Gabriel Devenant in its entirety as yet; and could but judge of it from the garbled version given to him by the wretched man's widow. According to this, Geoffrey Stirling, and he alone, was responsible for the tragedy with which it closed. Should, then, the sin of the father be so visited upon the children as to stand between heart and heart, rend life from life, and make waste and barren what once had been so full of joy and promise?

It could not be, it could not be, that fate should have in store a blow so cruel!

Ralph was almost unmanned by the bitterness of such a thought. Life without Hilda—life without love—the arms that had clasped her close and fast to know such tender holding no more—the lips that had trembled at the touch of hers, to taste such sweet ecstasy never again!

"My God," he cried, "do not take her from me! I can bear all else, but not that, not that!"

The inevitable crisis of agonising thought is prayer.

Man is powerless to aid; our pain o'er-masters us; the present must be endured, but we plead with despairing passion that the future be given into our hand.

Ralph had cast himself down in a chair that stood opposite his father's writing-desk. He leant his arms upon the table; his eyes were hidden in his clasped hands. Hot tears welled up behind their closed lids; a sudden sob shook him.

A woman, in such a climax of feeling, would have found relief in weeping; but to a man tears are torture, and bring no solace.

"My love, my love!" he said softly, shaken by the passion of tenderness that thrilled him through and through, as he recalled his darling's white and troubled face—the quivering mouth that clung to his in that last mad kiss of pain and parting—the death-cold hands that, catching his, gripped them close, and then let them go, with a piteous gesture of supreme despair and tenderness.

His brave true love—woman and child in one—strong as the first, guileless and pure as the last; his "rose of the world," who had come to him, as he stood waiting for her in the sunshine, came to him singing of a love that could not die—singing of the divine gift she was bearing to him in her gentle hands, though she knew it not!

Stirring with the stirring of these sweet yet pitiful thoughts, Ralph's eye fell upon a letter that lay upon the desk before him. It was small and dainty; the handwriting fine and cultured.

Almost mechanically he raised it, broke the seal, of which the quaint device was a bird with wings widespread, bearing a scroll on which the motto ran, "I bring peace," and read it, at first quickly, as with impatience, then a second time with closer attention. After that he laid it down, and a smile—a poor wan smile—curved his set lips as he sighed:

"Too late—too late, good friend!" Yet he raised the messenger of peace once more, pressed it to his lips an instant, and said with fervency: "God bless you for the truest and the best—come what may——"

The letter ran thus:

"DEAR RALPH,—I cannot rest until I send you one line, just to say this—I will help you and stand by you through everything. Count upon me as your friend, and—hers—Your ever affectionate

"MARGARET BOSCAWEN."

Did not Ralph say well—was she not in very truth "the truest and the best?"

But the kindly pledge came too late. Lady Boscawen was fated to be still more puzzled, still more exercised in spirit in the future, than she had been in the past, over the affairs of Ralph Stirling, the man who was—in her eyes at least—like what her own boy might have been, had he been spared to her; and Denby was predestined to be, many times, called unsympathetic, when, in reality, the honest, sturdy fellow was only embarrassed how best to show his sympathy, and conceal his dismay.

Having laid Lady Boscawen's letter aside, to be answered when time should be found for anything outside the one engrossing idea of the present, Ralph crossed to the fireplace; rang the bell; told the man-servant who answered it that he wished to speak with Mrs. Prettyman; and then—waited, conscious that the impending interview was one of vital import, shrinking from it, yet longing for it.

The poor soul came in timidly. She trembled, fingering the frill of her vast white muslin apron, and making believe to notice Gaylad, who rose to meet her, stirring his tail gently.

"Poor old fellow!" she said, speaking as though she had run along the passages

and corridors, and lost her breath in the process.

She did not look at Ralph, but said, (still seeming to have all her attention fixed upon Gaylad): "Did you want to speak to me, Master Ralph?"

"Yes, nurse. Come in and shut the door—close."

As if she didn't feel bad enough already, but that her "boy" must call her by the dear old baby-name, and "overset her" worse than ever!

She shut the door close, as he bade her, and then raised her eyes to her master's face.

What she saw there made her give a great gasp, and drove all trace of ruddy colour from her own.

Ralph came close up to her and laid his hand heavily upon her shoulder. That hand shook so much, and lay so heavy on her, that she shook with the strain and the tremble of it.

Was that her darling boy—her own dear "Master Ralph" who spoke in such a strange hoarse voice, and whose haggard miserable eyes looked like—like his father's in those last sad days of all?

"Nurse, dear old nurse, I think my heart will break to-night."

Then she knew all.

She had been on the wrong track. She had fancied "that woman's" daughter—(thus disrespectfully and loathingly did Mrs. Prettyman designate Hester Devenant)—had been at the bottom of the mischief to-night. She had fancied herself summoned to her "boy's" presence to hear that a new mistress was coming to queen it at Dale End—nay, for was not a man in love no better than a blind, besotted fool?—perhaps that Hester Devenant was to be taken out of her own natural sphere, and set on high among her betters.

Now the faithful creature knew that a worse blight, a deeper sorrow had fallen upon the home that was Master Ralph's that night.

"Do not look at me like that! Do not speak to me!" she cried, straining away from his hold, smiting her hands together in an agony of pity and despair; "I cannot bear thy looks, nor thy words neither—oh, my boy, my boy!—but I can find breath to curse them as cast this sorrow on thee, and I know where the curse must light."

"You have no comfort to give me? You dare not say to me that that madwoman's

words are but the ravings of a disordered brain?"

Only silence answered him. Only the poor helpless hands beating each other in a dumb despair.

"Tell me what you know?"

Ralph's voice, manner, aspect, all had changed in an instant.

Certainty brought strength and courage, where suspense had but weakened.

Nurse Prettyman started at the sound of that imperious behest, reflecting the very trick and manner of the dead.

Had she shut her eyes she might have fancied it was her old master, Geoffrey Stirling, speaking. She thrust out her hand as though seeking some support. She staggered as she stood,

"Sit down," said Ralph kindly, yet with the same air of imperative resolve. "Try to think and to speak calmly; it will be the best help you can give me—the truest comfort."

He took her by the hands, placed her in a chair, and then stood leaning against the mantelshelf to hear what she would say.

The high narrow mirror that had once reflected Geoffrey Stirling's horrible Doppelgänger—the fell presentment of a man stricken for death—now gave back the fine clear profile of his son—the bloodless, marble features set in a stern resolve.

"Ask me what you want to know," said Mrs. Prettyman, trying to put a brave face on matters, and failing ignominiously; "my heart's i' my mouth, Master Ralph, and I conna speak for 't chokin' me."

"You knew—dear old nurse, do not tremble so—that my father, my dear father, had—some trouble on his mind?"

"Aye, I knew 't, none better. I was comin' along the corridor one night—later than should have been, Master Ralph, for I'd dropped off i' my chair over my knittin'—when a cold wind met me face to face, douted my candle, and slammed a door, all in a minute, so that I'd no breath left in me, and leant up agen the wall for a kind o' stay and comfort. There I stuck, starin' at the dark, as you may say; when all at once a glint o' moonshine come through the tall winder by the door, and out in the glimmer o't, I saw somethin' white creeping along secret-like, same as a boggart at cock-crow. There'd bin some talk among Jeremy and the maids of a ghost bein' seen down by the big 'dendron-tree; so I was fearsome-like, from hearin' their daft chatterin'. Well, I scrimpit mysen along to the winder,

and there, out among the trees, I saw a man i' a long white frock an' wi' a mighty red beard and a waggoner's hat on him. He turned his head this way and that, as he crep' along, and peeked in at the winder where I stood shakin' as he passed. His face was like a dead man's face; his eyes blind-like; but for all that, something came over me all of a moment, that it was—it was—oh, Master Ralph—say the rest yersel'!"

"It was—my father?"

"Aye, aye—none else. I guessed the door that slammed was the door above the steps—that door forenenst which the old dog lies now, as you see. I knew, all of a moment, that master was walking in his sleep. I knew it might be death to wake him. This door was locked. I ran—how quick you'd scarce believe, Master Ralph, seein' I'm such a cumbersome kind of a shape—got through the far door into the bedroom, and so behind the curtains of that window there, before the—thing—came round to the door that had slammed. It—he—fumbled a bit at the handle, got it open, came in (still going secret-like), closed it behind him, drew the bolt as cunnin' as though he'd bin as wide awake as you or me this miserable night, and slithered himself into the next room, but left the door open behind him. By this time the moon shone so bright I could see as well as if it had been day. I could hear, too, and this is what I heard him say: 'The weary, weary way—all the weary way—with that burden on my back—gold that is not mine, gold that the devil keeps, to torture me.' And then—oh, my boy!—the sigh he gave was like to burst his poor aching heart."

Here Nurse Prettyman paused.

She would like to have seen her "boy's" face; she would like to have watched how he bore the dreadful tidings she had to tell.

But his face was hidden; his form was motionless; he made no sign.

"While I stared at him—as stare I might, and had good cause—he began takin' off the great red beard, strippin' the waggoner's frock from off his shoulders, and laying them as orderly as anything in the big oak box that used to stand beside his bed. I heard a low kind of a rustle by

the glass door, and my heart stood still i' my bress wi' fear when I looked and saw a mad-like face pressed close agen the pane. It had a hood clippin' it round, and was gone like a shadow all in a minute as I looked, but I knew it for Hester Devenant's by the bad, black eyes that glared like a cat's in the dark, and what a wonder and amaze I fell into the Lord only knows. Still, I'd little time to think of owt save the master, such a terrification was on me, lest he'd do himself a mischief. I slipped my shoes from my feet, stole to the door there, and watched what he'd be after next. He must have fallen asleep in his chair, for he'd all his clothes on, even to his coat, and it was the strangest thing to see how deft he were wi' 's hands, how he pul't the waggoner's frock off as handy as a woman, and folded it as neat as ninepence; then he laid it i' the box, and put the hat, and wig, and beard atop on't. I heard something jingle in the bottom of the box, but could not see what 'twas—for he closed it sharp, I can tell you, and 'Safe,' says he; 'safe—thank God!' It shut with a spring, all in a minute like, and then he turned him round, like as if to make sure none but himself was near, and laid him down on the bed, just dressed as he was, with a bit of a sigh, like a tired child. I waited a while, douted a candle that was flarin' and spittin' in the socket, took a look at his quiet face (quiet, indeed, for the eyes were fast closed, and he breathed soft and easy), and crep' away to bed, but not to sleep, Master Ralph—not to sleep."

"No, my poor old nurse, no. That was a sad night's work for you, dear."

"His very voice, his very ways. Oh, my dear old master!" cried Mrs. Prettyman at this, and the fountain of her tears broke forth abundantly.

"Hush!" said Ralph tenderly; "you must not weep like that—yet. There is so much to do, so much to hear. Tell me more still; tell me of the night he died."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LVII. MR. PROSPER SHOWS HIS GOOD NATURE.

WHILE these things were going on at Tretton, and while Mr. Scarborough was making all arrangements for the adequate disposition of his property,—in doing which he had happily come to the conclusion that there was no necessity for interfering with what the law had settled,—Mr. Prosper was lying very ill at Buston, and was endeavouring on his sick-bed to reconcile himself to what the entail had done for him. There could be no other heir to him, but Harry Annesley. As he thought of the unmarried ladies of his acquaintance, he found that there was no one who would have done for him but Miss Puffie or Matilda Thoroughbung. All others were too young or too old, or chiefly penniless. Miss Puffie would have been the exact thing,—only for that intruding farmer's son.

As he lay there alone in his bedroom his mind used to wander a little, and he would send for Matthew, his butler, and hold confidential discussions with him. "I never did think, sir, that Miss Thoroughbung was exactly the lady," said Matthew.

"Why not?"

"Well, sir! There is a saying— But you'll excuse me."

"Go on, Matthew."

"There is a saying as how you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

"I've heard that."

"Just so, sir. Now, Miss Thoroughbung is a very nice lady."

"I don't think she's a nice lady at all."

"But— Of course it's not becoming

on me to speak against my betters, and as a menial servant I never would."

"Go on, Matthew."

"Miss Thoroughbung is——"

"Go on, Matthew."

"Well. She is a sow's ear. Ain't she, now? The servants here never would have looked upon her as a silk purse."

"Wouldn't they?"

"Never. She has a way with her, just as though she didn't care for silk purses. And it's my mind, sir, that she don't. She wishes, however, to be uppermost, and if she had come here she'd have said so."

"That can never be. Thank Heaven; that can never be!"

"Oh no! Brewers is brewers, and must be. There's Mr. Joe—— He's very well, no doubt."

"I haven't the pleasure of his acquaintance."

"Him as is to marry Miss Molly. But Miss Molly ain't the head of the family;— is she, sir?" Here the squire shook his head. "You're the head of the family, sir."

"I suppose so."

"And is——? I might make so bold as to speak?"

"Go on, Matthew."

"Miss Thoroughbung would be a little out of place at Buston Hall. Now as to Miss Puffie——"

"Miss Puffie is a lady,—or was."

"No doubt, sir. The Puffies is not quite equal to the Prospers, as I can hear. But the Puffies is ladies—and gentlemen. The servants below all give it up to them that they're real gentlefolk. But——"

"Well?"

"She demeaned herself terribly with young Tazlehurst. They all said as there were more where that came from."

"What should they mean by that?"

"She'd indulge in low 'abits,—such as never would have been put up with at Buston Hall. A-cursing and a-swear-ing——"

"Miss Puffle!"

"Not herself! I don't say that; but it's like enough if you 'ad heard all. But them as lets others do it almost does it themselves. And them that lets others drink sperrits o' mornings come nigh to having a dram down their own throats."

"Oh laws!" exclaimed Mr. Prosper, thinking of the escape he had had.

"You wouldn't have liked it, sir, if there had been a bottle of gin in the bedroom." Here Mr. Prosper hid his face among the bedclothes. "It ain't all silk that comes out of the skein that does to make a purse of."

There were difficulties in the pursuit of matrimony of which Mr. Prosper had not thought. His imagination at once pictured to himself a bride with a bottle of gin under her pillow, and he went on shivering till Matthew almost thought that he had been attacked by an ague-fit.

"I shall give it up, at any rate," he said after a pause.

"Of course, you're a young man, sir."

"No, I'm not."

"That is, not exactly young."

"You're an old fool to tell such lies."

"Of course I'm an old fool; but I endeavour to be veracious. I never didn't take a shilling as were yours, nor a shilling's worth, all the years I have known you, Mr. Prosper."

"What has that to do with it? I'm not a young man."

"What am I to say, sir? Shall I say as you are middle-aged?"

"The truth is, Matthew, I'm worn out."

"Then I wouldn't think of taking a wife."

"Troubles have been too heavy for me to bear. I don't think I was intended to bear trouble."

"Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," said Matthew.

"I suppose so. But one man's luck is harder than another's. They've been too many for me, and I feel that I'm sinking under them. It's no good my thinking of marrying now."

"That's what I was coming to when you said I was an old fool. Of course I am an old fool."

"Do have done with it. Mr. Harry hasn't been exactly what he ought to have been to me."

"He's a very comely young gentleman."

"What has comely to do with it?"

"Them as is plain-featured is more likely to stay at home and be quiet. You couldn't expect one as is so handsome to stay at Buston and hear sermons."

"I don't expect him to be knocking men about in the streets at midnight."

"It ain't that, sir."

"I say it is that."

"Very well, sir. Only we've all heard downstairs as Mr. Harry waan't him as struck the first blow. It was all about a young lady."

"I know what it was about."

"A young lady as is a young lady." This was felt to the quick by Mr. Prosper, in regard to the gin-drinking Miss Puffle and the brewer-bred Miss Thoroughbung; but as he was beginning to think that the continuation of the family of the Prosper must depend on the marriage which Harry might make, he passed over the slur upon himself for the sake of the praise given to the future mother of the Prospera. "And when a young gentleman has set his heart on a young lady he's not going to be braggydoshed out of it."

"Captain Scarborough knew her first."

"First come, first served, isn't always the way with lovers. Mr. Harry was the conquering hero. 'Weni; widi; wici.'"

"Halloa, Matthew!"

"Them's the words as they say a young gentleman ought to use when he's got the better of a young lady's affections; and I dare say they're the very words as put the captain into such a towering passion. I can understand how it happened, just as if I saw it."

"But he went away,—and left him bleeding and speechless."

"He'd knocked his weni, widi, wici out of him, I guess. I think, Mr. Prosper, you should forgive him." Mr. Prosper had thought so too, but had hardly known how to express himself after his second burst of anger. But he was at present ill and weak, and was anxious to have someone near to him who should be more like a silk purse than his butler, Matthew. "Suppose you was to send for him, sir."

"He wouldn't come."

"Let him alone for coming. They tell me, sir——"

"Who tells you?"

"Why, sir, the servants now at the rectory. Of course, sir, where two families is so near connected, the servants are just as near. It's no more than natural."

They tell me now that since you were so kind about the allowance, their talk of you is all changed." Then the squire's anger was heated hot again. Their talk had all been against him till he had opened his hand in regard to the allowance. And now when there was something again to be got they could be civil. There was none of that love of him for himself for which an old man is always hankering, for which the sick man breaks his heart; but which the old and sick find it so difficult to get from the young and healthy. It is in nature that the old man should keep the purse in his own pocket, or otherwise he will have so little to attract. He is weak, querulous, ugly to look at, apt to be greedy, cross, and untidy. Though he himself can love, what is his love to anyone? Duty demands that one shall smooth his pillow, and someone does smooth it—as a duty. But the old man feels the difference, and remembers the time when there was one who was so anxious to share it.

Mr. Prosper was not in years an old man, and had not as yet passed that time of life at which many a man is regarded by his children as the best of their playfellows. But he was weak in body, self-conscious, and jealous in spirit. He had the heart to lay out for himself a generous line of conduct, but not the purpose to stick to it steadily. His nephew had ever been a trouble to him, because he had expected from his nephew a kind of worship to which he had felt that he was entitled as the head of the family. All good things were to come from him, and therefore good things should be given to him. Harry had told himself that his uncle was not his father, and that it had not been his fault that he was his uncle's heir. He had not asked his uncle for an allowance. He had grown up with the feeling that Buston Hall was to be his own, and had not regarded his uncle as the donor. His father, with his large family, had never exacted much—had wanted no special attention from him. And if not his father, then why his uncle? But his inattention, his absence of gratitude for peculiar gifts, had sunk deep into Mr. Prosper's bosom. Hence had come Miss Thoroughbung as his last resource, and Miss Thoroughbung had called him Peter. Hence his mind had wandered to Miss Puffle, and Miss Puffle had gone off with the farmer's son, and, as he was now informed, had taken to drinking gin. Therefore he turned his face to the wall and prepared himself to die.

On the next day he sent for Matthew again. Matthew first came to him always in the morning, but on that occasion very little conversation ever took place. In the middle of the day he had a bowl of soup brought to him, and by that time had managed to drag himself out of bed, and to clothe himself in his dressing-gown, and to seat himself in his armchair. Then when the soup had been slowly eaten he would ring his bell, and the conversation would begin. "I have been thinking over what I was saying yesterday, Matthew." Matthew simply assented; but he knew in his heart that his master had been thinking over what he himself had said.

"Is Mr. Harry at the rectory?"

"Oh yes. He's there now. He wouldn't stir from the rectory till he hears that you are better."

"Why shouldn't he stir? Does he mean to say that I'm going to die? Perhaps I am. I'm very weak, but he doesn't know it."

Matthew felt that he had made a blunder, and that he must get out of it as well as he could. "It isn't that he is thinking anything of that, but you are confined to your room, sir. Of course he knows that."

"I never told him."

"He's most particular in his enquiries,—from day to day."

"Does he come here?"

"He don't venture on that, because he knows as how you wouldn't wish it."

"Why shouldn't I wish it? It'd be the most natural thing in the world."

"But there has been—a little—I'm quite sure Mr. Harry don't wish to intrude. If you'd let me give it to be understood that you'd like him to call, he'd be over here in a jiffy." Then, very slowly, Mr. Prosper did give it to be understood that he would take it as a compliment if his nephew would walk across the park and ask after him. He was most particular as to the mode in which this embassy should be conducted. Harry was not to be made to think that he was to come rushing into the house after his old fashion. "Halloa, uncle, aren't you well? Hope you'll be better when I come back! Have got to be off by the next train." Then he used to fly away and not be heard of again for a week! And yet the message was to be conveyed with an alluring courtesy that might be attractive, and might indicate that no hostility was intended. But it was not to be a positive message; but one which would signify what might possibly

take place. If it should happen that Mr. Harry was walking in this direction, it might also happen that his uncle would be pleased to see him. There was no better ambassador at hand than Matthew, and therefore Matthew was commissioned to arrange matters. "If you can get at Mrs. Weeks and do it through his mother," suggested Mr. Prosper. Then Matthew winked, and departed on his errand.

In about two hours there was a ring at the back door, of which Mr. Prosper knew well the sound. Miss Thoroughbung had not been there very often, but he had learnt to distinguish her ring or her servant's. In old days, not so very far removed, Harry had never been accustomed to ring at all. But yet his uncle knew that it was he, and not the doctor, who might probably come,—or Mr. Soames, of whose coming he lived in hourly dread. "You can show him up," he said to Matthew, opening the door with great exertion, and attempting to speak to the servant down the stairs. Harry at any rate was shown up, and in two minutes' time was standing over his uncle's sick chair. "I have not been quite well just lately," Mr. Prosper said in answer to the enquiries made.

"We are very sorry to hear that, sir."

"I suppose you've heard it before."

"We did hear that you were a little out of sorts."

"Out of sorts! I don't know what you call out of sorts. I have not been out of this room for well-nigh a month. My sister came to see me one day, and that's the last Christian I've seen."

"My mother would be over daily if she fancied you'd like it."

"She has her own duties, and I don't want to be troublesome."

"The truth is, Uncle Prosper, that we have all felt that we have been in your black books; and as we have not thought that we deserved it, there has been a little coolness."

"I told your mother that I was willing to forgive you."

"Forgive me what? A fellow does not care to be forgiven when he has done nothing. But if you'll only say that bygones shall be bygones, I'll take it so."

Mr. Prosper could not give up his position as head of the family so easily,—an injured head of the family. And yet he was anxious that bygones should be bygones,—if only the young man would

not be so jaunty, as he stood there by his armchair.

"Just say the word and the girls shall come up and see you as they used to do." Mr. Prosper thought at the moment that one of the girls was going to marry Joe Thoroughbung, and that he would not wish to see her. "As for myself, if I've been in any way negligent, I can only say that I did not intend it. I do not like to say more, because it would seem as though I were asking you for money."

"I don't know why you shouldn't ask me."

"A man doesn't like to do that. But I'd tell you of everything if you'd only let me."

"What is there to tell?" said Uncle Prosper, knowing well that the love-story would be communicated to him.

"I've got myself engaged to marry a young woman."

"A young woman!"

"Yes;—she's a young woman, of course. But she's a young lady as well. You know her name. It is Florence Mountjoy."

"That is the young lady that I've heard of. Was there not some other gentleman attached to her?"

"There was;—her cousin, Mountjoy Scarborough."

"His father wrote to me."

"His father is the meanest fellow I ever met."

"And he himself came to me,—down here. They were fighting your battle for you."

"I'm much obliged to them. For I have even interfered with Mountjoy about the lady."

Then Harry had to repeat his *veni, vidi, vici*, after his own fashion. "Of course I interfered with him. How is a fellow to help himself? We both of us were fond of the same girl, and of course she had to decide it."

"And she decided for you?"

"I fancy she did. At any rate I decided for her, and I mean to have her."

Then Mr. Prosper was, for him, very gracious in his congratulations, saying all manner of good things of Miss Mountjoy. "I think you'd like her, Uncle Prosper." Mr. Prosper did not doubt but that he would. He also had heard of Miss Mountjoy, and what he had heard had been much to the "young lady's credit." Then he asked a few questions as to the time fixed for the marriage. Here Harry

was obliged to own that there were difficulties. Miss Mountjoy had promised not to marry for three years without her mother's consent. "Three years!" said Mr. Prosper. "Then I shall be dead and buried." Harry did not tell his uncle that in that case the difficulty might probably vanish, as the same decree of fate which robbed him of his poor uncle would make him owner of Buston. In such case as that Mrs. Mountjoy might probably give way.

"But why is the young lady to be kept from marriage for three years? Does she wish it?"

Harry said that he did not exactly think that Miss Mountjoy, on her own behalf, did wish for so prolonged a separation. "The fact is, sir, that Mrs. Mountjoy is not my best friend. This nephew of hers, Mountjoy Scarborough, has always been her favourite."

"But he's a man that always loses his money at cards."

"He's to have all Tretton now, it seems."

"And what does the young lady say?"

"All Tretton won't move her. I'm not a bit afraid. I've got her word and that's enough for me. How it is that her mother should think it possible,—that's what I do not know."

"The three years are quite fixed."

"I don't quite say that altogether."

"But a young lady who will be true to you will be true to her mother also." Harry shook his head. He was quite willing to guarantee Florence's truth as to her promise to him, but he did not think that her promise to her mother need be put on the same footing. "I shall be very glad if you can arrange it any other way. Three years is a long time."

"Quite absurd, you know," said Harry with energy.

"What made her fix on three years?"

"I don't know how they did it between them. Mrs. Mountjoy perhaps thought that it might give time to her nephew. Ten years would be the same as far as he is concerned. Florence is a girl who, when she says that she loves a man, means it. For you don't suppose I intend to remain three years?"

"What do you intend to do?"

"One has to wait a little and see." Then there was a long pause, during which Harry stood twiddling his fingers. He had nothing further to suggest, but he thought that his uncle might say something. "Shall

I come again to-morrow, Uncle Prosper?" he said.

"I have got a plan," said Uncle Prosper.

"What is it, uncle?"

"I don't know that it can lead to anything. It's of no use, of course, if the young lady will wait the three years."

"I don't think she's at all anxious," said Harry.

"You might marry almost at once."

"That's what I should like."

"And come and live here."

"In this house?"

"Why not? I'm nobody. You'd soon find that I am nobody."

"That's nonsense, Uncle Prosper. Of course you're everybody in your own house."

"You might endure it for six months in the year."

Harry thought of the sermons, but resolved at once to face them boldly. "I am only thinking how generous you are."

"It's what I mean. I don't know the young lady, and perhaps she mightn't like living with an old gentleman. In regard to the other six months, I'll raise the two hundred and fifty pounds to five hundred pounds. If she thinks well of it, she should come here first and let me see her. She and her mother might both come." Then there was a pause. "I should not know how to bear it,—I should not indeed. But let them both come."

After some further delay this was at last decided on. Harry went away supremely happy and very grateful, and Mr. Prosper was left to meditate on the terrible step he had taken.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

NO. IX. OUR BARONET (CONTINUED).

It must not be supposed that while Mr. Thomas Kedgbury was teaching mathematics, or eating his dinners in the Temple, that the Greek patriots were forgotten. Indeed, their representatives in England were far too well informed and wide-awake to allow themselves and their sacred cause to be forgotten by anybody, and least of all by one who was the heir-apparent to a goodly rent-roll and the present possessor of a sufficiency of ready cash. It was a very common thing to meet on Mr. Kedgbury's staircase in Hare Court, black-haired, keen-eyed, hawk-billed gentlemen, whom a stranger might easily have mistaken for financial agents from Sackville Street, or persons in the employ of the

Sheriff of Middlesex. Most likely, however, they would have claimed direct descent from the victor of Thermopylae, and would have answered to some such high-sounding name as Leonidas or Demetrius.

The struggle for freedom on the shores of the Archipelago was still going on. One heard much of the patriots who flocked in their thousands to the national standard, but plenty seemed to be left in London to look after the collection of the sinews of war while their brethren fought the Turk.

Sir Thomas did not follow the course which is not an uncommon one with heirs-apparent when they come into their inheritance. He did not turn his back on his conspirator friends and rally to the cause of order. On the contrary, his name was advanced to a place near the head of the list of sympathisers with the cause of Greek liberation, and it may be assumed that a corresponding increase in the amount of his contribution to the funds took place.

For six months after Sir David's death things went on very quietly at The Latimers. Sir Thomas became as popular as genial, open-hearted young gentlemen usually become when they succeed old gentlemen who are crusty and close-fisted. The first sign of entertainment was the arrival of three members of the Greek Committee on a visit—the Hon. W. Cuffe, who had just come direct from the seat of war; Mr. Michael Rafferty, a graduate of T. C. D. and a member of the Irish bar; and a M. Dionysus Tricopoulos, the brother of a general in high command. Poor old Sir David! It is to be hoped that the stone lying above him was heavy enough to keep his spirit safe within the limits of the family vault, for, supposing it to have had the power claimed by certain spirits nowadays of taking possession of household furniture, it would have passed a bad quarter of an hour as tenant of the library-table listening, for instance, to Mr. Rafferty, who stood on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire making a speech in which all advocacy of the claims of Hellas seemed to be postponed in favour of a disquisition on the wrongs of the Emerald Isle; or to M. Tricopoulos explaining, by the aid of some shreds of paper and letter-weights, how the Turkish commander was going to be surprised and his troops cut to pieces the week after next; or to the master of the house speaking words the like of

which had never been spoken by a Kedgbury before.

Though Shillingbury was a very unpromising field for the enterprise, Sir Thomas determined to make a local effort in favour of the cause while his distinguished visitors were with him. The word "Philhellene" was heard in Shillingbury probably for the first time. There was a lecture by the Hon. W. Cuffe, given at The Black Bull Assembly Room, on "Greece, Past and Present," illustrated by a series of magic-lantern slides. Dr. Unwin, who was supposed to know as much Greek as any one in the county, was appropriately exalted to the chair, and slept placidly through the whole proceedings. The lecture, I remember, did not provoke much enthusiasm—perhaps it was just a trifle over the head of Shillingbury—but there was no doubt about the applause which followed the exhibition of the pictures on a white sheet. M. Tricopoulos made a speech, very fluent and in wonderfully good English, considering that he was a foreigner; and Sir Thomas wound up the meeting by a spirited appeal to the men of Shillingbury, to lend a hand to give to the Greeks those blessings of freedom which were the Englishman's birthright.

Miss Letitia Kedgbury did not escape the contagious enthusiasm. Now that she could speak her mind without provoking a domestic outbreak she gradually developed opinions so liberal as to astonish even her nephew, who was of course aware already that she had been acting a part during the latter years of her father's life. She subscribed liberally to the cause, she sent out divers needy patriots to join the army, and she wrote verses of a Byronic character for the poets' corner of The Martlebury Mercury. Miss Kedgbury was young for her age and fond of society, and she had found The Latimers in the closing years of Sir David's life to be terribly dull. Things were very much more lively under the new régime, for the county people, in spite of Sir Thomas's political backsliding, were quite ready to welcome the opening of a new house which promised to be rather a warm one in the neighbourhood in which, to use an Irish expression, absentees were too plentiful. Every one of any note within calling distance duly left their cards, and the return calls, after a due interval, were followed by a series of very stately and rather dull dinner-parties. These, of course, were returned by Sir Thomas, and

this succession of banquets, taken together with two county balls in the winter, and three archery meetings in the summer, made up the sum and substance of the year's gaiety. This programme was certainly a great improvement on life at The Latimers in her father's time, when often, for weeks at a stretch, she would not see a fresh face except when Tom was down in vacation. Still, it was not wildly exciting, and Miss Kedgbury was not entirely happy. She found that she had very little in common with the worthy people at whose houses she dined, and who in turn did her the honour to drive ten miles to eat the dinner she had prepared for them.

Miss Kedgbury read Balzac and Lady Morgan. There was a copy of Voltaire's Romans safely locked away in her cabinet, and she had heard a good deal, and read a little, of Godwin and Jeremy Bentham. The wives of the neighbouring squires and parsons were not quite at their ease in her presence. They somehow seemed to feel that she would not be keenly interested in listening to the catalogue of the trials they were suffering at the hands of their domestics—servants were not perfect even in those days—or of the peculiarities and perfections of the last-arrived baby; and Miss Kedgbury, on her part, was quite sure that her guests knew and cared as little about social economy and the liberation of Hellas as they did about the laws of the Greek accents.

After the quasi-official courtesies had been exchanged, there was a long respite from entertainments of all kinds, and Miss Kedgbury began to think that a little county society of the sort that was to be had round about Shillingbury went a very long way. She had had enough of it for a time at least; but the country life, without any society at all, was terribly dull, and therefore it seemed a veritable godsend when she found that Sir Thomas was going to transact some of the business connected with the Greek Committee at The Latimers instead of in London. She became her nephew's amanuensis, and was in constant correspondence with lords and right honourables in England, and with gentlemen in foreign parts, who bore names high-sounding enough for royal dukes or serene highnesses at the very least. M. Dionysus Tricopoulos seemed at this particular juncture to be the very life and soul of the organisation in England. He was here, there, and everywhere, now whipping up the friends of the cause in Manchester, now

speaking at a meeting at Birmingham, now heading a deputation to a Minister in the metropolis, but, in spite of all these engagements and other calls upon his time too numerous to mention, he managed to put in an appearance at The Latimers at least once every month. M. Tricopoulos was a tall handsome man, of fine presence and graceful carriage. His features were regular, though not exactly of the type one sees in the marble of Phidias and Praxiteles. He had a pleasant voice and manner, and a very sweet smile, but his eye was apt to grow a little shifty under a steady look of interrogation. He was always dressed in the height of fashion, a little foppishly, perhaps, with that exuberance of much-pinned silk cravat, figured waistcoat, and velvet collar to which the bucks of the age were given.

At Shillingbury we were astonished at the perfect English he spoke, but perhaps there was not much cause for wonder after all, seeing that he had been born and educated in England, and had never set foot on the sacred soil of Greece. M. Tricopoulos would generally manage to spend the Sunday at The Latimers. He used to declare, indeed, that if he had not been able to enjoy these delicious intervals of repose, his work would have been too much for him. Whatever he might have done in London, he never read the newspapers or secular books on the Sunday at The Latimers, and he never failed to attend at least one service in Shillingbury church, for, though a member of the Greek communion, M. Tricopoulos, like many of his compatriots, was not a bigoted adherent of that form of religion. Indeed, before very long, it was whispered abroad that there was a probability of his conforming openly to the Anglican rite; and rumour on this occasion turned out to be more trustworthy than she is proverbially represented to be.

This conversion, or perversion, of M. Tricopoulos was certainly rather a strange step for a man in his position. It must be noted that he was a leader of men who were fighting for the blessings of religious, as well as political, freedom. Such men usually have the courage of their opinions, and are by no means easy to change. All the more credit, therefore, must be given to the person who managed to convince M. Tricopoulos of his errors. This person was no other than Miss Letitia Kedgbury.

Now, up to this time, missionary enterprise had not been much favoured by Miss

Kedgbury's patronage. She was a subscriber to none of those societies which undertake the conversion of the heathen in distant lands, and on one occasion, when the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke made an effort to enlist her sympathy and aid on behalf of the Zenanas of our Indian Empire, she gave that gentleman a snubbing which he did not forget in a hurry; but it was a different matter altogether talking with an educated gentleman like M. Tricopoulos, discussing the question of the "Homousion," and bringing forward arguments in favour of the double procession of the spirit. Anyhow, Miss Kedgbury talked in so convincing a strain, that M. Tricopoulos was persuaded to enter the pleasant fold of Anglicanism; and he was wont to say that, whether Greece were freed or not, whether the cause of liberty triumphed gloriously, or sank in an abyss of blood and flame, he at least would not have entered the contest in vain; for if he had not moved to the front, he would never have made the acquaintance of Miss Letitia Kedgbury, or have found that perfect spiritual tranquility with which he was now blessed.

It is pretty generally known, I think, that the struggle for Greek independence was a prolonged and embittered one, and that the patriots squabbled amongst themselves rather too much for the vigorous prosecution of the campaign. The death of Lord Byron was a terrible blow to the cause in England. After this the enthusiasm of many began to wax cold, and the supply of the sinews of war—necessary in any belligerent undertaking, but doubly necessary, apparently, in this—began to show signs of running short. At the meetings of the Greek Committee there were angry demands for information, and scarcely concealed distrust at the management of affairs. At last, one day M. Tricopoulos, who held a brief for the militant patriots, took the bull by the horns, and proposed that a member of the committee should be sent out to the seat of war, to report whether things really were as bad as it was represented. Before he sat down he suggested that this post of honour and responsibility should be entrusted to Sir Thomas Kedgbury.

It is probable that many of those present, as they listened to M. Tricopoulos, were disposed to rate the honour of such an embassy as this less than the responsibility. A journey to Greece in those days was no light matter. A tedious sea voyage, an

unhealthy climate, and a very fair chance either of being shot by the Turks, or of being carried into perilous captivity by the more irregular soldiers of freedom. Nevertheless Sir Thomas, who was as yet untouched by the spirit of lukewarmness, placed his services, without reserve, at the disposal of the committee. He laid in a stock of pistols and daggers of the most approved pattern, purchased a handy carbine and a store of ammunition, and made himself ready to face the dangers of the voyage.

The ship in which he had taken his passage sailed from Southampton, and, on the morning of the day on which he was to have gone down to embark, he received notice from the agents in London that the sailing of the vessel had been postponed for two days. So he stayed on in town, and it was just as he was making ready to get into the Southampton coach that a letter was brought to him, the address of which he saw at a glance was in the handwriting of Clarkson, the old butler at The Latimers. It was very rarely that Clarkson wrote to him, and he had an uncomfortable feeling as he broke the seal of the letter that all was not right; and the reader when he comes to know the full contents of Mr. Clarkson's epistle, will probably admit that they were quite startling and important enough to make Sir Thomas change his plans. The butler's letter ran as follows:

"HONOURED SIR,—I am well aware a servant has no call to interfere with things which don't concern his own place, and I am sadly afraid I am taking upon myself too much when I write this letter to you about things as are going on down here just at present while you are supposed to be in forrin parts. But, honoured sir, having served your grandfather and yourself all these years, I cannot sit down and see you wronged, and other members of the family as might know better at their age a bringing disgrace on their selves and on you as well, honoured sir; and I hope as I shall not be considered as forgetting my place when I say English gentlemen is the right people for English gentlemen to keep company with, as I have heard my dear old master as is dead and gone say times and often, and not forriners with names as you carnt nayther speak nor spel properly. Well, on last Tuesday that forrin gent, Mr. Trickybowles, came over here from Shillingbury to bring Miss Letitia the news about your being gone to where the war is, which everybody agreed might have been

just as well writ by post and much cheaper. He stayed to lunch, and while I was serving I heard several things which made me suspicious as he had another game in hand besides this message. Of course we all of us thought as he was going back to London the next day, but no, not a bit of it. Sir, he has taken a room at The Black Bull, and he comes over here every day, and from the goings on I see, as sure as you are alive, which I hope you may be many happy years, he will persuade Miss Letitia to marry him, and take her off to Jamaiky or somewhere if you don't come back and put a spoke in his wheel at once. I am not writing this all out of my head, which Mrs. Wilkins says just the same, and that Miss Kedgbury is just like a miss of seventeen over a flower that the fellow gave her, and had it put in her glass on her table so she might see it the first thing when she woke in the morning, and——"

Sir Thomas could read no more. A feeling of disgust and resentment he would have found it hard to justify came over him. The situation was indeed a little peculiar; for it does not fall to the lot of every man to be called in to revise the love-affairs of his aunt. Angry as he was with Miss Kedgbury, he was still more incensed against the crafty foreigner who had evidently determined that he would play a little game of his own at The Latimers, besides the big one of the liberation of his fatherland. Ah, how strong is the old leaven of savagery in our nature! We have taught ourselves to work with men of other races, to trade with them, and to eat with them; but let one of them move a step towards the charmed enclosure of our family life, and the survival of that hatred and suspicion, which one tribe of our wandering forefathers felt towards another, at once blazes up. M. Tricopoulos was an educated gentleman, and Miss Kedgbury was certainly old enough to know her own mind; but if her nephew had learnt that she was about to marry a crossing-sweeper, his disapproval could hardly have been greater.

There was no time to be lost. Sir Thomas's luggage was all packed, ready for a start, but this he left at the hotel; and, taking only a small bag with him, he started at once, and just managed to catch the Folkshire coach, which changed horses at The Five Pigs, at Blenheim cross-roads, about five miles from Shillingbury, at seven in the morning. He could get no inside place. It was late autumn, and when he

reached his journey's end he was chilled to the bone by the rapid motion through the biting air of early morning. Mrs. Jillings, the landlady, was astir and brought out a can of hot beer flavoured with nutmeg and ginger, which everyone drank with relish. The baronet's return was, of course, quite unexpected. There was no carriage to meet him; Mrs. Jillings had no trap of any sort which was let for hire; so the only way of getting over to The Latimers was to walk. But Sir Thomas had missed his dinner the evening before, and was very hungry by this time. An appetising smell of eggs and bacon was issuing from the kitchen, so he ordered breakfast and sat himself down in the beer-and-tobacco-scented parlour till it should be ready.

At eight o'clock another coach which ran up to London, also stopped to change horses at The Five Pigs; and, before the breakfast which Sir Thomas had ordered was on the table, several travellers arrived to catch the London coach. They most of them came in open gigs and carts; but about a quarter to eight a post-chaise, with closed windows and well loaded with luggage, drove up, and brought itself to a standstill close to the parlour-window, near which Sir Thomas was sitting. This was, of course, a very ordinary circumstance in days of coaching; but there was a something about this particular post-chaise which roused especially Sir Thomas's attention. He could have sworn he had seen before a carpet-bag which was stowed away on the box-seat; and the aspect of a large trunk on the top seemed quite familiar to him. The blinds were down, but after a minute, the one on the side farthest from where Sir Thomas was sitting was drawn up; the window was opened, and a lady's voice was heard calling to a stable-help who stood near, and telling him to take down the luggage from the top. The tones of this voice, even when heard through a closed window, made Sir Thomas start; a suspicion began to grow very rapidly in his mind that he had not come back an hour too soon; and this suspicion became certainty when the blind nearest to him was drawn up, and he saw that the lady who sat in the post-chaise was no other than his aunt, Miss Letitia Kedgbury.

In an instant the whole affair was clear to him as daylight. The prologue of the story of the Trojan War was just going to begin, only on the present occasion Paris came from Sparta, and not from the city of Priam. Sir Thomas at once grasped the

situation. Two things must be done at once. He must get the post-chaise, with Miss Kedgbury inside, on its way back to The Latimers without delay; and he must be careful to bear himself so that he might accomplish this not very pleasant task without word or manifestation of any sort which might give occasion for scandal hereafter. It wanted but ten minutes to eight now, so there was need for promptitude. He rushed to the door, nearly upsetting in his exit the savoury dish he was destined never to taste, and walking up to the open window of the post-chaise, he said to Miss Kedgbury, after a good-humoured greeting, how kind it was on her part to come over to meet him so early in the morning.

The poor lady's face fell as soon as she recognised her nephew, and he, marking her confusion, fell back from the window a little, and told the man who had come to take down the luggage to wait a bit. The post-boy, who had gone into the inn for a morning draught, here reappeared, and recognising Sir Thomas, began to touch his cap violently.

"Jump up," said the baronet, "and drive back to The Latimers at once. I will ride on the box." He sprang up as he spoke; the post-boy obeyed without a sign of dissent; and thus, without the chance of saying a word of explanation, Miss Kedgbury was whirled back by the same road along which she had travelled, in a very different humour, not half an hour before.

The direct way to The Latimers lay for some mile and a half along the turnpike-road. Sir Thomas, as he sat upon the box, probably dreaded the first half-hour of the home-coming quite as much as Miss Kedgbury did. Just before the postchaise reached the by-lane which led to the park gates, the coach bound for London came in sight. There were but two outside passengers. One was a red-faced cattle-dealer, who stared hugely to see Sir Thomas sitting on the box-seat of a post-chaise, and the other was M. Dionysus Tricopoulos.

Sir Thomas gazed straight before him as the coach swept by, and took no heed of the cattle-dealer's salute, or of the look of terror and confusion which came over the countenance of the Greek. The carriages met, passed each other, and separated; the one bearing back Miss Letitia Kedgbury to the tranquil home she had too hastily abandoned; the other carrying away

M. Dionysus Tricopoulos to London, and out of this narrative for good and all.

In spite of Sir Thomas's precautions, the whole story, with divers emendations and additions, was soon public property. Carefully as he played his part he deceived nobody, not even the post-boys and stable-helpers at The Five Pigs; for ladies, when they go to meet their nephews returning from London by the coach, do not as a rule take a dozen or so packages of luggage with them. By degrees the leading facts leaked out. M. Tricopoulos had started with the coach from Martlebury, having taken two places—one outside and one inside to avoid suspicion—to London, intending to pick up his Helen at Blenheim cross-roads; but fate and Sir Thomas Kedgbury had willed it otherwise.

What passed between the aunt and the nephew that morning, after the library door closed behind them, will never be known. The look upon old Clarkson's face, as he opened the front door, was one of blank astonishment, which soon gave way to one of keen satisfaction as he ordered the post-chaise round to the side-door to unload its complement of luggage. After a little everything settled down into the ordinary groove. Sir Thomas did not leave home for several months. He had found out, apparently, that any counsel or advice he might be called upon to give to the Greek patriots could be given quite as well by letter as in person. He settled down to county work, and very soon became the leading spirit of the county meetings by his ability and force of character. He pushed himself generally to the front, and was returned to Parliament as Liberal member for Martlebury, our cathedral city, on the death of one of the sitting members. In less than a year after that sudden return of his from London he married, and then Miss Kedgbury was suffered to depart unimpeded from The Latimers. She took up her abode at Cheltenham. Outwardly there was peace and good-will between her and her nephew; but certain people who were in a position to know declared that Miss Kedgbury never forgave that officious action of Sir Thomas, when he ordered the post-boy to drive back to The Latimers in the raw mist of that November morning; and that the baronet, if he nourishes any hopes of securing Aunt Letty's thirty thousand pounds for his second son, is building the castle of his hopes upon the sand. This might have been mere gossip, of course, but

I think I am speaking well within bounds when I say that the discovery of M. Tricopoulos's designs gave a death-blow to Sir Thomas Kedgbury's enthusiasm for the cause of Hellas. He never again set eyes on the crafty Dionysus. His name after a time disappeared from the Greek Committee; and it has been remarked that, from this period, he has been content to allow the pioneers of freedom, whether in the East or in the West, to work out their own emancipation without any interference on his part.

THE OUTER HEBRIDES.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

IN my last paper I spoke of the singular sandy shores of that group of isles in the Outer Hebrides, which, collectively, obtain the name of "the Long Island." A very notable peculiarity of the Southern Isles in this cluster—namely, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist, with the small outlying isles of Vallay, Baleshare, Grimisay, and Rona—is, that though at high tide they are separated by sounds which in some cases are several miles in width, and of such depth as to be navigable by small vessels, they are at low tide practically one island, connected by flat reaches of sand and low rocks, across which, at certain hours, it is possible to walk or ride, though in some cases the safe track is so devious that it is necessary to secure a guide ere attempting it. For it would be a serious matter to miss the track, when in the midst of a desolate flat, perhaps five miles in width, across which, a very few hours later, the sea will be pouring in a swift tidal current with irresistible force.

No wonder, then, that the fords occupy a large share of consideration, and that their daily changes form a very absorbing topic of conversation. Persons meeting casually on the road, instead of exchanging comments on the weather, naturally do so with respect to the fords—whether it is likely to be a good ford or a bad one, a dry ford or a wet one, and especially at what hour there will be a ford—in other words, at what hour it will approach low tide. And a very serious matter it is, to ensure getting accurate information on the subject, where a miscalculation may prove a matter of life or death.

Not only does the condition of these fords vary with every ebb and flow, but still more, of course, with the periodical

"spring" tides and "neap" tides, and with every changing influence of storm or calm. Moreover, the character of the fords connecting the various isles is essentially different. Between Vallay and North Uist stretches a level shore of hard white sand, two miles in width, affording a firm roadway for cart or rider, though few such come to disturb the white-winged sea-birds which float in the breeze, like flecks of spray from the white surges beyond.

But the fords which connect the more thickly peopled isles are a precious harvest-field for the inhabitants, who day by day go forth with their creels (i.e., the wicker baskets they habitually carry on their backs) to collect whatever treasures have been left for them by the ever-bountiful waters. It is a daily lottery in which none need draw blanks, for though the supply may not sound very inviting to our fastidious ears, these poor folk are well content with a mixed bag of periwinkles, whelks, cockles, mussels, and spout-fish. The latter are the long razor-shell, which lies buried beneath the sand, and periodically throws up a jet of water, like a miniature whale, thus gaining its name, and revealing its presence to the watchful eyes of the women and children, who quickly dart towards the tiny fountain and dig out the hidden dainty. A tough leathery morsel it is, more so even than the dulse—an edible, claret-coloured seaweed, of which large quantities are consumed.

By way of less indigestible fare, tiny fishes and crabs are caught in the little pools among the rocks, and so, day by day, each gleaner in this harvest of the sea returns laden with something that can be eaten to eke out the poor cake of oatmeal or the bowl of porridge which form the only household fare. Fortunate indeed are those homes which lie within reach of the shore, and of these daily gifts of old ocean. For those who live far inland there is no substitute, and as a large number of the people either cannot afford to keep a cow, or have no pasture for her, the luxury of milk is unattainable, and dry porridge day after day is dull fare, albeit there are at this moment many thousands in the Western Isles and Highlands who would be thankful indeed were they able to procure a sufficient supply of oatmeal for their daily need.

Between North Uist and Benbecula lies "the Big Ford," which is about four miles in width, extending partly over somewhat

uncertain sands, and then following a very uncertain track, twisting and turning, in and out, between low reefs of black rocks, through beds of seaweed and tangle, partly covered with water, skirting quicksands and dangerous holes. Here and there stands a black beacon, a survivor of those which were once erected to mark the track, but of which winds and stormy waters have carried most away, so that those which remain are comparatively few.

This is a dreary and wet tramp even on the rare days of sunshine, but in the grey stormy weather which mostly prevails in these sad isles it is truly repellent. Far as the eye can reach, nothing is visible but amphibious islets of black bog, the largest of which are the inhabited isles of Grimisay and Baleshere.

Nor is bleak Benbecula itself much of an improvement, for it is but a dreary expanse of dark peat-moss and sodden morass, only varied by shallow brackish lochs—a very picture of desolation, and its few wretched inhabitants seem like the natural product of the land that has given them birth.

Yet the dreariness seems all intensified when, after splashing through the South Ford, South Uist is reached, one wide dismal morass, varied indeed by the great frowning form of Mount Hecla, which attains a height of two thousand five hundred feet, but has nevertheless no attraction of beauty in its sweeping curves. Here, too, the land is showered over with shallow lakes, some of them of considerable size, but none exceeding a few feet in depth, dark and pitch-like. In the frequent prolonged rains the country is reduced to a mere bog, so, at some period of unwonted energy, the road was constructed across the island upon a narrow stone causeway, carried in a straight line over moor and moss. This, however, has been suffered to fall into disrepair, and grows gradually worse and worse.

The misery of the inhabitants is in keeping with the dreariness of their wretched hovels, which are squalid and filthy beyond description, clustered together in the midst of the dismal morass, only to be reached by stepping-stones across black quagmires. Such homes! Mere peat huts—walls and roofs alike built of sodden turf through which the rain drips drearily on the damp earthen floors where the half-naked children crawl about among the puddles. Small wonder that the children born and reared in such surroundings should be puny and

sickly, and their elders listless and dispirited, with no heart left to battle against such circumstances.

When their dull life is ended they are laid to rest in a very old burial-ground on the top of a grass-grown sand-hill, overlooking the wild ocean. A cross of worm-eaten driftwood marks the centre, round which are laid the Roman Catholics, who predominate in the isle. Protestants are buried in an outer circle, while beyond these are laid strangers and the unknown dead who are cast up by the sea. A few richly-carved stones mark some of the older graves, but most have only a grassy mound where bluebells and sea-pinks blossom lovingly above the nameless dead. And when the wild winds sweep over the green hill, and the rustling bent-grass sways in the breeze, the living listen reverently with a lingering belief that the spirits of their forefathers are borne along by those rushing winds, and that their warm grey ghosts do oftentimes appear, dimly shadowed amid the misty hills.

Very different to these dreary isles of sodden morass is the cluster of precipitous isles to the southward, whose bold cliffs of dark whinstone and grey gneiss or granite form the westernmost bulwark of Scotland's possessions—always excepting St. Kilda, that lonely rock which rises precipitously from the waves, at a distance of sixty miles from the Long Island.

Of these southern rocky isles, Barra is only separated from South Uist by six miles of rolling ocean, Isle Eriskay rising from the Barra Sound as a connecting link in the island chain, which, growing gradually smaller and more remarkable in the successive isles of Vatersay, Saunderay, Pabbay, Mingalay, and Bernera, then terminates abruptly. As seen on the map the general outline of these Outer Hebrides is singularly suggestive of the form of some sea-saurian, whose snout is represented by the Butt of Lewis, his under-jaw by Trompan Head, whilst the broken chain of islands suggests his jointed body.

Barra presents a sea-face of dark rocks and caves, broken by deep bays, gleaming with the finest white shell-sand. The interior of the isle is wild and rugged, but its green hills afford good pasturage for sheep and cattle. Here, in days of old, dwelt the MacNeils of Barra, whose home was Kisimul Castle, most picturesquely situated on a rocky island in Kisimul Bay. It is a noble ruin still, perhaps more striking now in its old age, and with a kindly veil of delicate

ferns (*Asplenium marinum*) fringing the stately old keep, than even in the days when the island chiefs here held their court, and the galley of MacNeil found a secure refuge from the storm in a cunningly constructed dock, actually within shelter of the castle walls, a strong sea-wall affording protection from the waves.

This old castle is known to have existed for about seven hundred years. When Martin visited these isles, two hundred years ago, the castle was still inhabited, and the warlike precautions instituted by piratical chiefs were still kept up. Guards and sentries were duly posted, to keep watch in case of possible surprise, and an official known as the "gockman" was placed on sentry duty over the gate, and whiled away the long hours of night by droning out old Gaelic songs, and occasionally hurling stones at imaginary foes.

Doubtless the rhymes he chaunted were old as the warlike traditions which he represented, for this wave-washed old fortress of the MacNeils was actually built on the site of a very much older Danish fort, called Tur Leoid, under whose shelter a fleet of Danish galleys lay, ever ready for action. Now all is very peaceful, and the only enemy to be guarded against, is that most insidious of foes—famine—against the gaunt approach of which the wariest watchers can avail nothing, and which to-day, alas! broods over all these western isles.

To the south-west of Barra extends the disconnected chain of precipitous isles, rocky ramparts, and battlemented cliffs, rising sheer from the great green waves; crags for the most part inaccessible to man, but dear to myriads of wild sea-birds, which float around their summits, like quivering snow-flakes in a wintry storm.

Grandest of all is the Isle of Mingalay, whose dark precipices tower a thousand feet from the sea. In the summer months these are literally white with the vast multitudes of sea-fowl of every species, which, arriving for a preliminary visit in February, come to take up house in May, when they lay their eggs and rear their broods. Through the long summer months the strangest order prevails in this well-organised bird community. Every rock-ledge seems to be apportioned, and each family holds its ground by some most rigid land tenure, for there is no trespassing, and no poaching, all goes on in perfect amity, notwithstanding the overcrowding of the feathered multitude.

As the autumn closes in, the patriarchs of the community give the signal for departure, and soon not one fluttering wing remains to give a semblance of life to the cold stern crags, and the inhabitants of the few small hovels, whose chief occupation lies in bird-catching, settle down to their long seven months of winter, ere they need hope for the return of the wild, beautiful sea-birds.

One mile from Mingalay lies South Bernera, the southernmost of the isles, a bold mass of gneiss, about a mile in length and half a mile in width, sloping gradually downward towards the east, but presenting to the western waves a precipitous front of about seven hundred feet in height, crowned with a magnificent lighthouse of granite and iron, such as may defy the wildest storm, and warn all mariners to keep as far as possible from this deadly coast. It is said that this blessed light can be discerned at a distance of upwards of thirty miles, but, practically, the height of the crag on which it has been placed is found to be a disadvantage, as its light is often shrouded in mist, while all is clear below.

Lonely, indeed, is the lot of the men in charge of this beacon light, left to their own resources on this uttermost isle, their only communication with the outer world being when, twice a year, the lighthouse stores are brought by a steamer, which can only lie-to for a few hours, for there is no manner of anchorage, and the only possible landing-place is a shelving ledge of rock, on which he who would go ashore must spring, at the moment when his boat rises on the crest of a wave, and then make the best of his way to the summit, by scrambling up a slippery shelving rock.

Once a year, too, a priest from Barra comes here to visit his little flock, numbering about two score—a fine, hardy, self-reliant race. Their isle supplies pasture for cows and goats, so they have the blessing of good milk; otherwise the sea-birds who congregate on the cliffs—puffins and auks, guillemots and kittewakes—supply their larder with fresh meat in summer and salt meat for winter use; also with oil for their lamps and feathers for bedding. When fishing is possible, the boats go off to wrest a harvest from the sea—cuddies, haddock, herring, flounders, lythe and sythe, rock-codlings, and skate. Eels they will not touch, but dog-fish are welcome, and are salted and dried for winter store.

In the springtime thousands of eggs are

taken by bold cragsmen, who adventure, and sometimes sacrifice, their lives in this quest.

Never was there a more self-contained colony than these hardy folk, born and bred on this little lonely isle. Even their clothing is the product of their own isle—home-grown wool, all home-spun; dark-blue garments for the men, and striped winceys for the women. The little crofts supply a scanty store of oatmeal and potatoes, and though the rare luxuries of tea and sugar are, of course, imported, they are purchased in exchange for Bernera feathers, which are sold for bedding.

The only necessary of life which the isle does not produce is wood—not enough to make a walking-stick—but in a land where the houses are built of turf, which also supplies needful fuel, it is wonderful how little wood is really necessary, and the Ocean is kind to these her children, and oftentimes brings drift-wood and fragments of wrecks within their reach, enough for the manufacture of a few tables and benches, box-beds, and “kista.” The wood which most rarely floats to them, and is most valued, is such long spars as they can use in the making of bird-poles with which to knock down birds on the wing—a strange feat of skill, involving patient waiting, and a swift unerring blow. The time most favourable to this sport is during wild storms, when the very birds are bewildered, and, instead of flying straight to their nests in the cliff, are swept further inland. Then the fowler (who is lying patiently on his back on the very brink of the cliff, with his head to the sea, and armed with a long pole) strikes the bird with dexterous aim, rarely missing his mark.

It seems scarcely possible that even St. Kilda's lone isle can be more utterly isolated from the great, busy, bustling world than are these natives of Bernera. Yet it certainly lies more remote from the tide of life, being about fifty miles distant from the nearest isle, and a hundred and forty miles from the mainland. It is a larger world than Bernera, being three miles long by two in width, a huge mass of rock rising precipitously from the ocean; in some places attaining a height of about one thousand four hundred feet. Against these, the highest crags in Britain, the wild green waves dash ceaselessly, with the full sweep of the broad Atlantic, unbroken by one sheltering reef.

There are only two spots on the isle where it is possible to land, and one of

these is only by a steep scramble up the rocks. The other is at the mouth of a small green valley which runs down to the shore, along which lies the village of eighteen tidy two-roomed stone houses, built by the proprietor, Macleod of Macleod, to replace the too-wretched turf-hovels in which the poor islanders used to live in indescribable filth. They were huts with neither chimney nor window, merely flat-roofed peat-mounds thatched, and half-buried in an accumulation of filth, both outside and in. The miserable village was just like a Hottentot kraal, the houses rarely exceeding four feet in apparent height, being sunk in the earth so as to be less exposed to the wild raging winds which sweep the island with such terrific violence. Within there was no furniture of any sort, only dense clouds of thick peat-smoke, rising from a fire-place which was merely a hole in the centre of the hut. These primitive hovels are still to be seen, but when Macleod purchased this remarkable “fancy” property, his first care was to provide decent homes for the people, so now each family owns a substantial cottage. It cannot be said to have been a remunerative investment, if, as is stated, the price paid for this lone rock was about three thousand pounds, and its rental, in a good year, may be eighty pounds, all of which, and more to boot, is returned to the isle in some form or another.

In the little valley about thirty acres of land are under cultivation, oats and potatoes being grown in the usual tiny fields. But the crops are said to go on deteriorating, notwithstanding the fact that the supply of guano on the rock-ledges must be abundant and annually renewed. An average harvest only trebles the seed sown—a poor return for much labour.

About fifty head of black cattle and four hundred sheep find pasture among the rocky hills, but the pastures are also said to be seriously diminishing, as the necessity of procuring fuel leads to the turf being cut faster than it can grow.

The eighteen families are in truth branches of six families, representatives of the Fergusons and Gillies, McQueens, McCrinons, McDonalda, and McKinnons. They number in all about eighty souls, of whom about two-thirds are women, many of the young men having gone off in search of wider fields of life.

They are a comely, healthy-looking community, as those should be who are nurtured in such gloriously keen life-giving

breezes, laden with iodine ; and yet many are said to be afflicted with scrofula—probably due to constant close inter-marriage. That rheumatism should be sorely prevalent is only natural, for the battle of life is hard and the climate very severe, especially during the long, chill, snowy winters.

The people have all the good qualities that so often belong to a primitive isolated existence—exceeding honesty and kindness, a strong faith, and much devoutness. Apparently their religious training was well attended to by the early apostles of the Church in Scotland, for the sites of several cells of these saintly men are still pointed out on the isle. Now every man and woman on the isle, down to the six-year-old children, reads the Bible in the native Gaelic and devoutly attends the ministrations of a Free Church minister, long resident, who officiates in a neat little stone church.

Lonely, indeed, must be his lot, cut off from all communication with educated men, no post, no newspapers, few books, only exchanging words with members of the outer world on those rare occasions when a vessel chances to touch here from curiosity ; but these are rare indeed, as the extreme danger of the coast, without any sort of harbour or anchorage, causes most ships to steer very clear of these frowning crags.

The only regular communication with the mainland is when once, or perhaps twice, in the year a boat comes over from Harris—which may be considered the mainland of St. Kilda—laden with useful merchandise, to exchange for the produce of the isle, which consists chiefly of sea-birds' feathers, for bedding, and their eggs, which are used in calendering chintz—freshness, I am told, being no object.

But, though not averse to such occasional luxury as a cup of tea, these children of the mists and of the waves have few requirements which cannot be satisfied by their own toil on their own isle. Their sheep supply them with wool, which they spin and dye for themselves, and therewith knit their own stockings and weave strong home-spun cloth, from which they fashion their garments without undue slavery to fashion. Even their boots are of St. Kilda hides, home-made. Their curious rude pottery is roughly shaped by hand, glazed with milk, and then baked in the sun. It is not to be for a moment compared with even the

coarsest specimens of the hand-made pottery of the poor fisherwomen in the Fijian Isles. Nevertheless it answers its purpose, and bowls, jars, and cooking-pots of island-ware are still in common use.

Of course all wood has to be imported, for here, as in Bernera and many other isles, not a twig is to be seen ; and so the islanders have chiefly to rely on drift-wood for their timber supply. Happily the warm Gulf Stream brings them many treasures—including fine logs, which are none the worse for being encrusted with barnacles and seaweed. Stores from wrecked ships sometimes float within reach, not altogether destroyed by seawater, and though the precipitous coast affords no shelving shore on which kind Ocean may deposit her gifts, many such trophies are towed home by the fishers. The island now possesses two or three small boats, in place of only one, as was the case at the time of Martin's visit to St. Kilda.

Not long before his visit, this boat, containing six or eight men, had been wrecked near a neighbouring islet—a mere ocean rock. To this the men contrived to swim, and collected heaps of sun-dried seaweed. Of this they made separate piles, one to represent each man, and at night they lighted this row of bonfires, and the wives understood the sign and were comforted, and devoted all their energies to carrying on the men's work as well as their own, in working the little crofts, and tending the herds, till such time as the steward, or factor, should visit the isle, and go to the rescue of the men. This happy deliverance did not occur for several months, during which prolonged period the men had contrived to keep themselves alive on dulse and such fish as they could catch.

But the distinctive feature of St. Kilda is its bird-life, which is so abundant that to a vessel approaching the isle, the cliffs seem to be white, because of the countless myriads of gulls, guillemots, gannets, and all manner of sea-birds, whose nests are closely packed on every ledge in the face of the crag. All day long during the summer months these beautiful birds of dazzling whiteness float in tremulous clouds around their ocean-girdled home, as though the white spray of the surging billows were carried up to the blue heaven.

The more inaccessible the crags, the more thickly are they crowded with nests, and with the beautiful large blue and

green eggs, some of which are laid on the bare rock or amongst large stones, while more careful parents collect grass or rushes to soften the cradles of their nestlings. By some marvellous instinct, each bird knows its own egg amongst all those millions, and returns from its fishing expeditions to rear its soft downy offspring, and all through the long summer days busy life reigns in that vast nursery, and the young birds are trained to battle with wind and wave, and to snatch silvery dainties from the green seas.

Then, when all have grown strong, and are able to earn their own living, these beautiful snowy birds with the wild eyes and the eerie cry, prepare to seek their winter-quarters in some other clime. Deafening is the chorus of screaming and chattering as the feathery crowds prepare for their long flight. Then the great bird-army departs, and only the surging of the wild waves and the rushing winds disturb the stillness which enfolds the deserted isles, and the people say it feels sad and lonesome, as well it may.

For the birds represent their harvest and their work—a work enlivened by all the excitement of personal peril. The rock-fowler who would lay in a good store of eggs must be able to find a footing where no goat would venture, creeping along scarcely perceptible ledges, on the face of the giddy cliff, where one false step would assuredly prove his last, for the next moment would see him flash through the air to disappear in the seething ocean far below. The richest harvest awaits him on the ledges of crags, wholly inaccessible save to him who dares venture to let himself down, slung by a strong rope held by his companions on some upper cliffs.

The most trusty sort of rope is a three-fold twist, made of strong raw cowhide. This again is covered with sheepskin to protect it from the sharp cutting rocks. Such a rope as this is a precious heirloom—a bride can bring her husband no more valued dower, nor can a man bequeath to his friend a more excellent legacy, for with fair usage it should last at least two generations.

The fowler thus slung in mid-air carries a light pole, terminating in a cup-shaped bag, with which he scoops up the eggs from such recesses as he cannot reach by hand; and then carefully lays his treasures in the big creel which he carries for the purpose. Thus year by year the harvest of eggs is reaped, and multitudes of birds

are captured, and still their numbers show no decrease. Martin recorded how in one day he saw the people bring home two thousand sea-fowl and twenty-nine large baskets full of eggs, some containing four hundred eggs, others about eight hundred of lesser sorts. And still this great slaughter of birds continues year by year. At the present time it is estimated that upwards of twenty thousand gannets are annually captured in the Hebrides, yet year by year their hosts return numerous as ever.

Martin was much struck by the simple dower required for a young woman, namely, one pound of horse-hair, wherewith to make snares for the bridegroom's fowling!

Very quaint, too, is Dr. John Mac-Culloch's account of St. Kilda, published sixty-four years ago. He says: "The air is full of feathered animals, the sea is covered with them, the houses are ornamented by them, and the inhabitants look as if they had been all tarred and feathered, for their hair is full of feathers, and their clothes are covered with feathers. The women look like feathered Mercurys, for their shoes are made of gannet's skin. Everything smells of feathers."

Besides all the varieties of sea-gulls, many rarer birds breed here freely. Such are the great auk, the solan goose, and the great northern diver. There are eider-ducks too, whose nests are eagerly sought, for the sake of the precious down which the mother-duck plucks from her own breast, therewith to line her cradle, and with which also she covers her four eggs, that her nestlings may find a warmer shelter when they come forth. The islanders have small pity for this tender mother, and ruthlessly return several times in each season to rob each nest of one or more eggs, knowing that the long-suffering bird will not only lay more eggs, but will also renew the supply of down, again and again, till she literally has none left, whereupon the drake comes to the rescue, and contributes his share. By this process, a single eider-down duck can be induced to yield half a pound of down in a season, which, considering its amazing lightness, means an extraordinary amount.

Thousands of puffins live in colonies almost like warrens, many of them, indeed, making their nests in old rabbit-holes, while others burrow in the earth with their strong beak, or, as an English-speaking Scot would say, their "neb." Hence the common name for a puffin, "coulter-neb," from the coulter of a plough.

Here and there, among the serried ranks of white birds, grave black cormorants keep their solemn watch. Even these are eaten, though not greatly appreciated; though they are found less unpalatable when they have been buried for a day or two, and then skinned, ere they are cooked. The foolish guillemots are more in favour, and earn their name by sitting immovably on the rocks, and suffering the fowler to capture them by hand.

Multitudes of stormy petrel are caught with snares. Sailors say that they are named in memory of St. Peter walking on the waters; but they are known to the islanders as fulmar, and are specially prized on account of the large amount of oil they yield, a coarse yellow oil with a heavy rancid smell, which, however, is considered valuable as a cure for rheumatism, and moreover burns with a dim light in the rude lamps which afford a pale glimmer through the long dreary winter evenings. So exceedingly oily is this storm-bird (which, by the way, seems specially created to be a living proof of the value of oil on the waves) that it is said that a rude lamp is sometimes improvised by passing a wick through the body of a dead bird, and lighting it at the beak, when it will actually burn for some time. Even the oldest crones can do their part in snaring the birds, by setting long strings with nooses, and then watching, in order to pull the string at the right moment.

These are the cheery aspects of life on St. Kilda during the summer months, when the long day has practically no real night. But dreary, indeed, must be the wild wintry months, when for miles on every side nothing is visible but range beyond range of raging billows, and blinding spray enfolds the isle in drifting brine. Appalling thunderstorms darken even the brief hours of day, which give place to dismal nights averaging sixteen hours of darkness.

During these wintry storms, the cattle and the flocks must seek for themselves such corners of shelter as exist; and the people busy themselves with their weaving and knitting, and in cleaning and preparing their feathers. When ready for market they are stored in low stone cells, and covered with turf, to wait the arrival of the merchant from the Long Isle.

Thus, year after year, the simple round of life moves on. To the casual visitor it is a life full of strange, picturesque incident, but one suggestive of dull monotony to any but a born islander, one who can calmly

contemplate the prospect of watching the sun rise from the ocean, and sink into it again, day after day, always from the same spot, throughout his fourscore years. Yet such men do exist, and nowhere is the love of country and of home more deeply rooted than among the lonely islanders of St. Kilda.

SATURDAY NIGHT.

Is it fancy that on Saturday nights the sky takes a more lurid glare than at other times? as the long lines of lighted streets throw a glow like that of a distant conflagration over the horizon—for there is an horizon at times even in London, as to-night, when, with a keen wind and fierce bursts of rain, there are visions of dark purple rents in the clouds, and the sheen of tranquil stars. All round flickers the ruddy gleam as of distant bale-fires, and you may fancy that you hear the murmur of many voices, the echo of the din of the streets that put a girdle about the city of glaring lights and marching multitudes. Far and far away shine the beacons of this popular gathering. Town after town throws its flare also to the sky, even to the little villages, where labourers' wives throng to the universal shops where tea and bacon are sold with calicoes and corduroys—even these have their little glow to themselves, that strives to pierce the dark canopy of night, and to light up the wet, soaking footpaths through the fields, and the dark, mysterious woods.

But it is a far cry to the fields and woods from a cold and draughty carriage on the Metropolitan Railway, with a change of company at every station, the great streams of traffic having ceased to flow, and there being, instead, a multitude of bewildering eddies and whirlpools. Half the people abroad are women, worn and haggard-looking, with baskets and bundles—bundles cunningly rolled up and pinned with a certain finish and compactness that bespeak the hand of the pawnbroker's man. These are borne proudly, rather as evidences of wealth than of poverty, for happy is the woman who can get her children's clothes "out" on the Saturday night; people speak well of her in the neighbourhood, and her husband is evidently a shining character.

But it is not everyone who is out to spend the weekly wage and buy the Sunday's dinner. Here are some of us

who have yet to earn it: the freelances of civilisation, who make their bread out of the crumbs even of the poor man's banquet. Here is an old fellow with a long basket that he thrusts into the carriage, regardless of people's legs. An old fellow with ruddy, wrinkled face, his garments shabby but sound; a faded comforter twisted about his neck, and a cap on his head so padded and rounded at the top that it gives him an absurdly dignified appearance, as if he were a sheikh of Islam, who had fallen on evil days, and taken to selling pies for a living. But people come and go, now a seat changes its occupant, and again the whole carriage is emptied and filled again. It is like that parlour game, where first one jumps up and then another, while at the words, "General Post," we will say, the whole company dart around for seats. There is a general post at Westbourne Park, where a thickly-populated artisan quarter lies close at hand. Another general post carries us in its rush, and lands us in the Marylebone Road, in its desolate length, bordered by dead walls, the lamps twinkling in long rows, but only the upper windows of hospital or workhouse showing that people are living, or perhaps dying, in this wide and windy street.

But close by is Lisson Grove, where Saturday night is going on at full swing, the streets echoing with the cries of the dealers, while a patient, leisurely throng moves easily up and down. There is no hurry to-night, the world about us has no thought of going to bed for hours yet. But there is no merriment about the people, no gaiety; it is a solemn defile between the butchers' stalls and the costermongers' barrows, while the nose is regaled with an overpowering odour of fried fish. There would be an entire want of joyousness, indeed, but for the songs of birds. Yes, we are in a grove, and the birds are singing—as they sing nowhere else on a dark February night. Indeed, such a piping and warbling issues from the little bird-fancier's shop, that one suspects artificial piping to be going on in the back shop where one or two of the fancy are gathered; but no, the birds themselves are responsible for all the pleasing din, swelling their throats and warbling against each other—canaries, finches, thrushes, birds that ought to have their heads under their wings, and to be dreaming of other groves than this of Lisson. But here they enjoy a forced kind of spring-time; the warmth of the big fire that is

blazing, the lights from the street, and the noise and clatter of the people moving up and down, excite these little feathered imps to the utmost emulation.

Leaving this feathered concert, the streets, where no market is going on, seem quieter than ever, as we pass among rows of funereal emblems, which seem to invite you to look around and suit yourself with a monument; broken columns in polished granite, coldly glittering classic urns, and Gothic niches, only waiting for inscriptions. All at once we come upon a bright and stirring scene, where all the gaiety of Camden Town and Marylebone seems concentrated. For in Tottenham Court Road the world amuses itself and takes things easy. The mechanic with his pipe strolls along carelessly, his wife and daughter in attendance, the latter looking out for bargains in crockery. A young comrade comes along, and the women fall behind; but the young fellow looks over his shoulder smilingly at the girl, who seems to relish the fumes of his strongly flavoured tobacco. And then there is a kind of movement in the press, and a young fellow comes along at a good pace, followed, as you may see a hawk by a trail of little birds, only these are lads and girls laughing and jeering, while the young fellow's shoulders are white with flour, and he marches along with a grim kind of satisfaction, a bundle of *The War Cry* clutched like a banner to his breast. Again, there is a little crowd gathered about a certain corner window, a crowd that absorbs the bulk of the persecutors. Some enterprising tradesman has fitted up a window as a screen, and exhibits a magic-lantern from within, an exhibition of a high and elevating character: nymphs and tritons in a classic group typify boots and shoes at ruinously low prices, and *Britannia* surrounded by her favourite generals suggests that her children should lose no time in clothing themselves from head to foot at Mr. Bounce's stores.

And now there is a pleasant melody in the air of church bells ringing a merry peal, the bells of St. Giles in the Fields; a happy custom that, to ring in the popular fête of Saturday night, and enliven a scene that is otherwise not very joyous. For Seven Dials is not keeping up Saturday night with any spirit. Its ancient flare of wickedness has burned out, the days when it was the head-quarters of want and crime have passed away. One of the dials is represented by a coffee-shop, and there are

no longer great gusts of wild oaths and blasphemy pouring from the gin-shop doors. Is it the progress of morality? Well, it is rather the progress of "business." Shops and offices and workshops are filling up the slums, and ousting the evil birds that made their nests in these ancient rookeries. As for the other birds, the sweet songsters of the grove, they still flourish in the neighbourhood. Towards St. Martin's Lane the street is one long aviary, but there is no attempt amongst them to keep up Saturday night, the birds are all asleep quietly in their cages, and the frogs, newts, and snakes, that excite the wonder of passers-by in the daytime, are also taking their rest. There are streets, again, where something like a fair is going on, narrow courts where the cheapest kind of meat, which, if not exactly offal, is not far removed from it, seems to find ready sale. But in these places Saturday night seems to flicker and die away. Where there is no regular wage pay-day, St. Saturday becomes a moveable feast. Perhaps an odd stranger, with a few valuables in his pocket, would keep the whole court in a festive way for a considerable period, like a stranded whale among the Esquimaux, and this reflection suggests a prudent retreat to regions better explored.

If the disreputable quarters ignore Saturday night, so also do the wealthy and business-like. Piccadilly is as deserted as a Scotch deer-forest, and the Strand is dull and sleepy. As for the City, it is fit for a poet to dream in, full of rest and repose. At Bishopsgate the world wakes up again; here there are people always coming and going, and the open space in front of the railway-station, with the white gleam of the electric light, and the news-boys with their fluttering white sheets, and the people who are hurrying along and mysteriously disappear—all this has an eerie aspect that fixes itself in the mind.

But our aim is further east—the wide indefinite district known as Spitalfields. We are all among the groves and fields to-night, as if people could not help swarming about the once open spaces, where some such irregular markets may have been held in the days of Queen Bess. Only Spitalfields has a regular market of its own—a chartered market, with its title-deeds and parchments; able—aye, and ready too—to extinguish any enterprise for bringing cheap food to the people within the scope of its feudal privileges.

And yet, for a market of such antiquity and pretensions, it is wonderfully difficult to find. Spital Square must be somewhere near it; but Spital Square is a solemn and dignified place, where the houses are handsome and charmingly old-fashioned. Pleasant homes once, no doubt, were these, and centres of family life, half-French, half-English, inhabited by the descendants of French Protestant refugees, who founded the silk manufacture in these parts, and who have left a seal of refinement and taste even about these long-deserted homes. For there are no lights in the windows now; no girlish forms cast their shadows on the blinds, sending a thrill to the heart of one who in laced hat and roquelaure watches and waits outside. There would be music then, the jingling spinet and the sweet-toned harp, and sweet girlish voices breaking the stillness of night. But all is silent now. The hearths are cold, except, perhaps, where a silent housekeeper warms her toes over the fire; and the nearest approach to a roquelaure is the shining cape of a policeman.

Our policeman knows Spitalfields Market, of course. It is close by, just round the corner. Other people say the same. And yet we wander round all the four corners of Spitalfields, and still the market eludes us. A poor and closely-packed neighbourhood this, as soon as you pass between the posts that guard the entrance to the square. The narrow entrances and thickly-planted posts make one think that these good Protestant silk merchants had a latent mistrust of the people by whom they were surrounded, and laid out the square with a certain eye to defence against a mob. Anyhow, the surroundings are mean and squalid, a thick wedge of poverty and misery as little lightened by its surroundings as any similar space in the great city. Here you can dimly understand the prolonged tortures of industrious people, who find their industry no longer a support. The whole neighbourhood has a gloomy, poverty-stricken air—a deeper gloom, a more solid poverty than can be found elsewhere.

But the market, where does it hide itself? We have got into a region where people don't know such a place or have only heard of it traditionally without clear ideas as to its position, but at last, more by accident than design, the place is reached. The most ridiculous absurdity in the way of a market! A good-sized back parlour with

an avenue driven through it, occupied on either side by greengrocers and butchers, would give a good general idea of this Spitalfields Market, to find which has cost us so much trouble. Half-a-dozen strides take us through the market and fairly into the adjoining street, and so on our way to regions where Saturday night is carried on upon a larger scale.

Perhaps what strikes one most in the aspect of this thickly-populated district is the darkness of the streets. Few windows are lighted up, and there is nowhere the cheerful glow of firelight. It is a kind of solitude in which dark figures holding their garments together flit past like ghosts, and then, perhaps, this silence and this solitude is broken in a moment by a wild herd of lads, slinging along at a trot, with cries and shrill whistles, dashing away like lapwings at the sight of a policeman. The little public-houses have a mean and squalid look, and there are only rag and bone shops, with here and there a newspaper shop, to break the monotony.

In contrast what a gay and lively boulevard is Whitechapel! with tramway cars running up and down! with something like noise and gaiety upon the crowded footways, where in the broad margins of the road are piled impromptu banquets in the costers' barrows, innumerable saucers of delicacies in the way of shellfish, the delicate whelk, the molluscos mussel, all ready to be swallowed without more ado than a dash of vinegar out of a wine-bottle. Oysters, too, in their gleaming shells—Whitechapel has never gone without its oysters, even in the worst of times—and, besides, the most tempting morsels that can be compounded out of tripe and pig-meats. Here are life and movement and a grand mixture of all the lower strata—lower in position that is, the lower strata of life—and we are carried on by the current of people pressing forward, till presently we are brought-to in an eddy not far from where Aldgate Pump once stood. And here there is a German band blaring away in some spirited waltz, and a life and gaiety about the whole scene that quite reanimate the spirits. For, after all, Saturday night is a little fatiguing when taken continuously for some hours.

And then a rest upon wheels, through the quiet City streets and over London Bridge into the long radiating thoroughfares of Southwark. Here is the New Cut in full spate of its Saturday night, as if this were the only Saturday night going on

anywhere in London. Here the defile is at its height, and you can only squeeze slowly through the press of people; while the butchers shout clamorously into your ears; while the gas flares; and the street-singers scream. They tread upon each other's heels, these street-singers: a woman and three orphan children, a very doleful blind man, a soi-disant Manchester operative in distress; and with these come the clanging notes of an American organ, and the dropping shouts of the sellers of penny toasting-forks and gridirons, and of penny books that pretend to be more wicked than they really are.

But for noise, after all the butchers carry off the palm. A curious race these Saturday night butcher-men, not clean and rosy as the normal butcher, but dark, sallow, and rather dirty. Still, they are provided with an energy and command of language and a capacity for making a noise, that seem worthy of a higher sphere. Their customers are mostly critical, they prod the fat, and punch the lean, and hold whispered council together. A man with a baby on his arm peers eagerly among the joints, his face lights up, his wife, who has followed the direction of his eyes, shakes her head deprecatingly; they have no enthusiasm, these women. When the Sunday morning's joint is bought, there is the costermonger's barrow on the other side to supply the trimmings. For the hand of pork, the parsnips are waiting, there are red carrots for the ruddy beef, and the boiled mutton need not want turnips. Altogether there is not wanting a feeling of rough and ready plenty. Bakers carry huge trays of loaves on their heads, fruiterers break open great casks of apples, potatoes roll about the causeway, and piles of cabbages vanish in a twinkling. Literature is represented on barrows of secondhand books. A sort of Dutch auction is going on of odd volumes of magazines, histories out of date, and treatises of ancient type. The sight of a Scotch bonnet among the audience brings out three volumes of Scotch history. "It's worth a suvrein, gents, to read about Mary Queen o' Scots and all the ancient wars and battles," and, when he offers the whole for eighteenpence with no takers, he expresses a natural feeling of disgust that people should value so little the annals of their native land.

There are other distractions for the crowds who are keeping their Saturday night. The gigantic women whose arms and legs are in wonderful pictorial evidence

outside—all warranted solid flesh—are here for winter quarters. There is a giant somewhere about, and a small collection of wax-works that is trying to make its expenses till the sound of the turtle in the land once more announces the time for country fairs to begin. All these have their votaries, but the once great temple of the transpontine drama, the huge Vic, stands there silent and deserted.

As the night goes on apace and midnight approaches, there is little slackening in the tide of people. No one here either is in a hurry for bed—the little children are all awake and about, waiting to see what mother is going to bring for dinner to-morrow, and for a sight of their Sunday clothes that are all coming home in a bundle. Here and there a sodden bleary-eyed Megæra stalks along drunk and abusive; but the impression of the long night's ramble is of a great and salutary change in popular habits. Perhaps the streets are not quite so lively as of old, but they are decidedly more sober, on Saturday nights at all events, and the great heart of working London beats with a more steady, sober pulse.

From the crowd and press of Lambeth Marsh it is a strange contrast to cross the almost deserted bridge—the broad reach of the river rippling violet and purple in the rays of the bright electric lights—the tide running out in a swift relentless way, black barges clinging to the shadowed bank, a scene dreary and almost savage in its suggestions, while the waters murmur beneath as if they sought their nightly tale of victims. After which the slamming doors of the Underground Railway, and “Last train right away,” are cheerful and pleasant to hear.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III.

CHAPTER X. “I NEVER LOVED HIM TRULY—UNTIL NOW!”

“If I were to say, Master Ralph,” went on Nurse Prettyman, seeming to wince at the sound of her own words as if their utterance hurt her, “as no thoughts of the bank robbery and the man in the waggoner's frock come over me, after that night when I'd seen the ghost, and knew who it was, and whence it came, I should be sayin' what isna true; I should be keepin' back the thoughts o' my heart from

the boy as I love same as if I bore him myself—in place of only tendin' him, and watchin' over him when he was no size to speak of.”

Here the old woman stole a wistful glance at her master, hoping that these tender, helpless memories might soften the bitterness of what had gone before.

“Well, I thought and I thought, and this and that came up before me, till it seemed as if the knittin'-pins I kep' going all the time, were telling a terrible story as they clicked, and fittin' it all in, piece by piece, same as if it were the pattern on my work. Half the things I thought of had been forgotten. Such bits of things, too, they were, it was strange how much they made of themselves, risin' up out of the past like so many ghosts. Many's the time I've said to myself, ‘Lord forgive you, Eliza Prettyman, for a wicked-minded old woman this day!’ But it weren't no use; the thoughts came on, one atop of another, and not one but fitted into his own place.”

“I know, I know,” said Ralph, and in his voice was such pain, that poor Mrs. Prettyman had some ado to keep from bursting out crying afresh.

“I'm hurtin' you, Master Ralph,” she said, “hurtin' you sore. Oh, I'm nothing better than an old fool! Dunnot heed my foolish words, my dearie, tak' no heed on 'em, tak' no heed on 'em. They're nowt—they're nowt!”

In moments of strong excitement Mrs. Prettyman was always apt to fall into her native dialect, though at other seasons she was careful and polished enough in her mode of speech. Ralph knew, therefore, how deeply the tender honest heart was stirred when he heard the rough north-country twang, and saw the lips that spoke turn pale, and tremble.

“Come, come,” he said softly, speaking with all that outer calm that may cover a storm of restrained feeling; “you must not give way like this. You promised to help me, you know—to help me to the truth. If you fail by the way, dear old friend, how are we to get to the end of the story?”

“Ay, ay, the end of the story, that's the worst of it. Each word brings us nearer that—the end of the story. Ah, my dear, that's the hardest of all to tell!”

She lifted and wrung her hands, while Ralph watched her in a fresh amaze.

How was this terrible night to end—this night that had begun with all things fair and beautiful, all things sweet and tender;

with the touch of Hilda's trembling lips, and the clasp of her satin-soft hand, and had passed into a horror of unutterable pain, into the semblance of a dream, mystifying and terrible?

Scared by her young master's set pale face, by the infinite pathos of his mingled courage and suffering, Nurse Prettyman, with a shrewdness that is characteristic of the north-country peasant-class from which she sprung, realised that certain knowledge, however black, would be more endurable to him than suspense.

She rose to her feet, came close up to him, and laid her hand upon his arm, closely grasping it.

"The end of the story's this, Master Ralph," she said, her eyes glittering, her cheek flushing hotly with the passion of her speech: "Squire Geoffrey was driven to his death—hunted down—murdered—by Hester Devenant. She came here to help him, nurse him, she said, but that was only the false and lying face she put upon it. What she came here for was to spy upon him—to worm the truth out of him—to torture him with that cruel tongue of hers that sticks at nowt—and him struck down and laid so low already by the hand o' sorrow—the shameless hussy!"

There, it was told; that ghastly "end of the story," of which she had so dreaded the telling; and Master Ralph had taken it "better than she thought for."

Why, he spoke quieter than before!

"She wanted to force my dear father to confess?"

"Aye, that did she, and what's more, she had her way."

"How?"

"Ah, Master Ralph, there's none save One above knows that."

"Nurse, sit down again, you can speak quieter so, and the better you can speak, the better I can listen. Take up the story from the time when Davey, falling at his feet, told my father that he should see my face no more till the sea gave up its dead. I want to hear it word by word. I want to take it in—to write it on my heart for ever."

"He was stricken, Master Ralph, was the squire, by the words that Davey said."

"Through his heart—through his tender loving heart."

"Aye, though the heart as was still sorrowful for the loss of his 'pretty Lucy,' as he ca'd her. He was never the same no more."

"Never the same no more—so well he loved me."

"So well he loved you, Master Ralph; and he was full of strange fancies; he thought he was watched, hunted, suspected."

"God had taken from him the creature of whom he had made an idol, the creature for whom he had sinned; and so the sin began to weigh upon him, as it had never weighed before—poor heart!"

"You may well say that, Master Ralph. It was a cruel sight to see the change that but a day brought about in him. He drove Davey from his presence—me too, me too—and cried out mad-like, 'Are you spying on me too?' Then came that dreadful night when the vicar and Davey broke in through that door to find him lying all a-heap, and the doggie keenin' over him same as a Christian. I've told you over and over a'ready, Master Ralph, how we got him into the next room, and how Davey had Dr. Turtle by his side before you'd have thought he'd had time to run to the town, let alone back again. It was little the poor squire spoke them sad days. He'd moan, and mumble things we could make nor head nor tail of, and draw long sighs such as conna come from any heart but what's a broken one. But he mended; the doctor got to step lightsomer as he came out of the room, and took his pinch with a jauntier look on him; that did he! Still master needed a deal of watchin', and Davey and me got pretty nigh wearied out, for all the vicar took many a turn. Then Davey had to go south to see if any news could be gathered up about that misfortunate ship o' yours, and so things came heavier and heavier on me; and then I was smote down wi' a quinsy."

Mrs. Prettyman paused a moment, smoothing down her apron with trembling hands, before she went on with her story.

"Well, Master Ralph, when they come and told me how Mistress Devenant had made offers to help nurse the squire, I fair squirmed on my pillow, for I reckoned she'd some ill-will agen him, though far from measuring it right—how could I, indeed?—and I hated the woman, it's hard to say why. Hester Devenant had followed the master, time as he walked in his sleep. What of that! Anyone might have done the same. Perchance that little prattling fool, Jake, and then all the town would have known who the ghost was. But things being as they were, I'd never heard a word of gossip, so I'd no much call to put myself in a

tantrum over the woman coming, and yet I got the cold creeps down my back when Dr. Turtle told me on't, and told me joyful too. I couldn't say much, wi' a lump the size of a kidney-potato i' my throat, so I let him say his say, and have his way; but I prayed the Lord to let the quinsy burst sharp—and it did, Master Ralph, it did, the night the squire died."

"The night she—murdered him?"

"Ay, and in a moment I was a woman who could breathe and speak, and do my duty in that state of life. I wrapped me in an old shawl, and set off as easy as anything down the corridors to tak' a peek at the new nurse, and see how she was wearin' through the night. That door—the one that leads into the passage from the room below—was a bit way open, and through it come a stream of light. You might have thought the place was afire by the blaze of it. New-fangled ways to deal wi' a sick man in the night-time, thinks I to myself. French ways, thinks I to myself, contemptuous-like, and wondering what her fine ladyship would say when I told her how the quinsy had bursted, and set me on my legs again. Well, Master Ralph, I stopped short outside that open door, for from within came the sound of voices—hers and Davey's. Now Davey had come off a journey and gone to his bed tired out and ready to fall asleep over his supper, so I wondered to find him in the squire's room at the dearest hour of the night."

"What did you hear?" cried Ralph.

"I heard Davey call the other a murderess, and then Mrs. Devenant screeched-like under her breath, and 'Not that,' says she, 'not that, call me anything but that! There is no blood upon my hands.'"

"The dream, the dream that Hilda told me of," muttered Ralph.

At which Mrs. Prettyman wondered, wondered—and hearing her young master say "Hilda," plump and plain, knew that love was his master, and Hester Devenant's daughter the woman he loved.

"Mistress Devenant was squeezed up agen the wall, like as if she'd ha' been glad to go through it and out at t'other side," said Mrs. Prettyman, taking up her narrative again—"like as if Davey had been drivin' her away, as far as he could, from the place where my master lay dead, with his white face looking upward, his eyes starin', and his poor dead hands stretched out straight, just, as I learned after, as they'd fallen from Davey's neck.

When I saw that sight, a mighty cry came out of me, and I fled to the bed, and cast myself down aside of it. Then Davey turned and saw me, and 'Mrs. Prettyman,' says he, sobbing so he scarce could get the words out, 'she's killed him, killed him, killed him!' Each time he said 'killed,' Mrs. Devenant shrank away against the wall, closer and closer, but as he went on reviling her, and calling her a Judas and a traitor, and many a thing I can't remember, her spirit seemed to rise up in her, and she came right across to me. 'See,' she says, pointing to the great oak box that stood there open, like a gaping coffin; 'it was your master walked at night among the trees—it was your master robbed the bank, and drove my husband to his death; and you—you do well to fight for him—he drugged you the night he robbed the bank—that was why you slept so sound; and he said he would have killed you if there had been need!' She set her teeth at this, and drew her breath in through them, so it sounded like the hissing of a serpent. But Davey, he looked at her steady, and I, holding the dead hand in mine, watched her too. 'He has confessed,' she said, 'he has confessed.' 'And died repentant,' says Davey, 'repentant, and praying for God's pardon. You are foiled all ways,' says he with a strange bit of a joyful-like laugh—'foiled of your vengeance here, and of his soul that rests with God. He did not drive your husband to his death,' says he (and you'd scarce have known Davey, Master Ralph, so stern was he, and his eyes shinin' like stars). 'You drove Gabriel Devenant to despair with your hard words and your hard ways, and despair made death come easy when an extra load of trouble fell on him. I tell you the man was glad to die.' Eh, but she shivered at that, and Davey so got the better of her with one thing or another that, last of all, he made her swear, in the presence of the dead, that no word of the ending the squire had made should ever pass her lips. He dragged her to the bed, and made her touch the poor dead hand that lay so helpless, and swear to all he bade her, holding it. She was more mad than sane, by then, yet had an evil look through all, and I heard her mutter to herself, and caught the look she threw at Davey when his back was towards her. By this, the candles were beginning to burn blue, and the mornin' was peepin' in through the curtains. 'Let me go,' says Mrs. Devenant,

and I saw she daren't let her eyes light on what lay so stark and stiff upon the bed. 'Silence for silence,' says Davey, catching her by the wrists, and holdin' her tight; 'that's our bargain. Keep silence on your side, and I'll tell no one that you drove the squire to his death. I know what you did,' says he, as fierce as fierce, and starin' at her so that she shrunk away from him like as if he could blight her where she stood; 'you gave him his sleeping-draught, lit up the place like this, and then roused him into frenzy with your gibes and accusations. You went a sure way to work,' says he; 'it's a pity you didn't put the candles out before I came,' says he, 'and manage to look a bit less guilty, a bit less like the murderess you are,' says he, and you'd have thought he'd give her a blow, she cringed so at the word whose sound she couldn't abide. 'Davey, Davey,' says she, 'how can you be so hard with me! You—why it isn't many hours back that you kissed me,' and she give a kind of a whine like a beaten dog, and came close beside him. 'I loved you then,' says Davey, 'for you were Hilda's mother.' 'I am that still,' says the other, proud-like all in a moment. 'No,' says he, 'not to me; never that to me any more, only my master's——' But she give a screech, and he hadn't time to get the word out. When she left the room she never once let her eyes near the bed, and then when we were well shut of her, Davey he told me—told me——"

"What my father had said, the message he had sent to me—his son?" put in Ralph firmly, coming promptly to the aid of the stammering tongue.

"Aye, Master Ralph, he told me all that, told me wi' tears and sobbings, same as a woman might, and we closed the poor staring eyes and the fallen mouth, and our tears fell on his still white face—for we loved him, Master Ralph, we loved him; let him ha' done what he might."

Ralph turned quickly from her. He dare not dwell upon the picture of this touching and absolute devotion. In stern self-control lay his only chance of endurance, his only chance of being able to face—as a man should face—the terrible duty that lay before him.

"What has come of Davey?" he said impatiently. "I told him to follow me, and at once."

"You have seen him then, sir?" said Mrs. Prettyman in some surprise. "I thought he had gone to the vicarage. He came in with your name upon his lips, and when all the mort o' things he's brought from foreign parts were safe up the tower stairs, he said he was going out. 'Won't you wait for the young master?' says I. 'No, I won't,' says he, and was gone, and Gaylad whinin' after him."

"He came after me to—Mrs. Devenant's," said Ralph, a sudden shudder shaking him.

Mrs. Prettyman gasped, but found no word ready.

"You have been faithful to me and mine," continued her master; "you have kept our counsel, and tried to shield our honour; you are friend and servant in one, and a friend should be treated with confidence——"

She knew what was coming, and waited trembling.

"I love Hilda Devenant, and she loves me. Either she will be my wife one day, or there will be no wife of mine ever at all, and I shall have to live with her dear memory for company as best I may—through a changed and altered life."

"A changed and altered life!" cried Mrs. Prettyman. "Ah, Master Ralph, my darling boy! what thoughts are in your mind? What strange fancies are over you! What strange look is that in your poor pale face? And yet you can smile."

"Yes, I can smile, for—hearken, dear good friend. I would rather my father had died as—as he did, with all the outward horror of it—died penitent, and yearning to make reparation—died craving God's pardon and man's pity, than that he had lived the sin and the sorrow down to the end. Nay, do not look at me like that, dear! Your boy has not gone mad; never, believe me, was he so truly in his sober senses; and, nurse—listen—I thought I loved my father all my life, loved him as the best and dearest thing that life held for me, but I think I never loved him truly—until now!"

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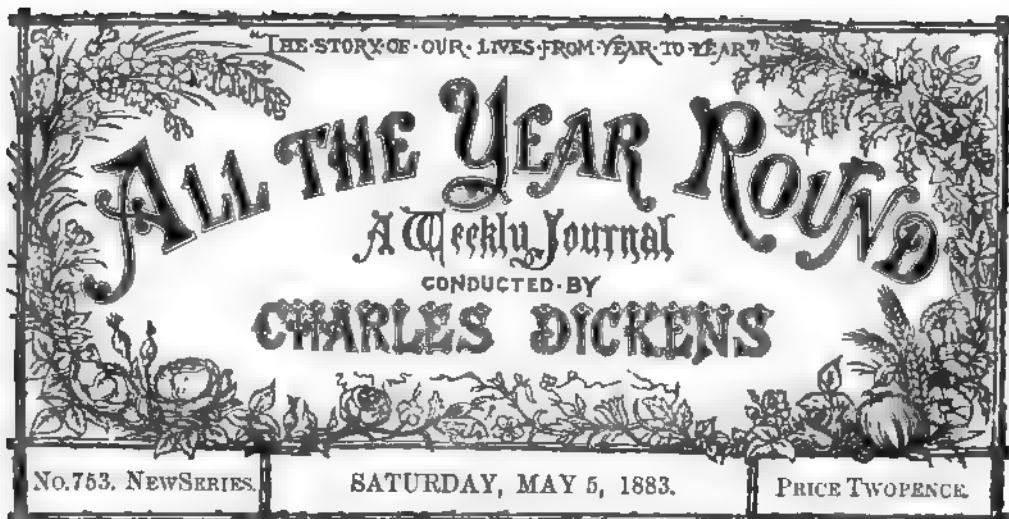
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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LVIII. MR. SCARBOROUGH'S DEATH.

IT is a melancholy fact that Mr. Barry, when he heard the last story from Tretton, began to think that his partner was not so "wide-awake" as he had hitherto always regarded him. As time runs on, such a result generally takes place in all close connections between the old and the young. Ten years ago, Mr. Barry had looked up to Mr. Grey with a trustful respect. Words which fell from Mr. Grey were certainly words of truth, but they were, in Mr. Barry's then estimation, words of wisdom also. Gradually an altered feeling had grown up; and Mr. Barry, though he did not doubt the truth, thought less about it. But he did doubt the wisdom constantly. The wisdom practised under Mr. Barry's vice-management was not quite the same as Mr. Grey's. And Mr. Barry had come to understand that though it might be well to tell the truth on occasions, it was folly to suppose that anyone else would do so. He had always thought that Mr. Grey had gone a little too fast in believing Squire Scarborough's first story. "But you've been to Nice yourself, and discovered that it is true," Mr. Grey would say. Mr. Barry would shake his head and declare that, in having to deal with a man of such varied intellect as Mr. Scarborough, there was no coming at the bottom of a story.

But there had been no question of any alteration in the mode of conducting the business of the firm. Mr. Grey had been, of course, the partner by whose judgment any question of importance must ultimately be decided; and, though Mr. Barry had

been sent to Nice, the Scarborough property was especially in Mr. Grey's branch. He had been loud in declaring the iniquity of his client, but had altogether made up his mind that the iniquity had been practised; and all the clerks in the office had gone with him, trusting to his great character for sober sagacity. And Mr. Grey was not a man who would easily be put out of his high position. The respect generally felt for him was too high; and he carried himself before his partner and clerks too powerfully to lose at once his prestige. But Mr. Barry, when he heard the new story, looked at his own favourite clerk and almost winked an eye; and when he came to discuss the matter with Mr. Grey, he declined even to pretend to be led at once by Mr. Grey's opinion. "A gentleman who has been so very clever on one occasion may be very clever on another." That had been his argument. Mr. Grey's reply had simply been to the effect that you cannot twice catch an old bird with chaff. Mr. Barry seemed, however, to think, in discussing the matter with the favourite clerk, that the older the bird became the more often could he be caught with chaff.

Mr. Grey in these days was very unhappy,—not made so simply by the iniquity of his client, but by the insight which he got into his partner's aptitude for business. He began to have his doubts about Mr. Barry. Mr. Barry was tending towards sharp practice. Mr. Barry was beginning to love his clients,—not, with a proper attorney's affection, as his children, but as sheep to be shorn. With Mr. Grey the bills had gone out and had been paid no doubt, and the money had in some shape found its way into Mr. Grey's pockets. But he had never looked at the two things together. Mr. Barry seemed to be

thinking of the wool as every client came, or was dismissed. Mr. Grey, as he thought of these things, began to fancy that his own style of business was becoming antiquated. He had said good words of Mr. Barry to his daughter, but just at this period his faith both in himself and in his partner began to fail. His partner was becoming too strong for him, and he felt that he was failing. Things were changed; and he did not love his business as he used to do. He had fancies, and he knew that he had fancies, and that fancies were not good for an attorney. When he saw what was in Mr. Barry's mind as to this new story from Tretton, he became convinced that Dolly was right. Dolly was not fit, he thought, to be Mr. Barry's wife. She might have been the wife of such another as himself, had the partner been such another. But it was not probable that any partner should have been such as he was. "Old times are changed," he said to himself; "old manners gone." Then he determined that he would put his house in order, and leave the firm. A man cannot leave his work for ever without some touch of melancholy.

But it was necessary that someone should go to Rummelsburg and find what could be learned there. Mr. Grey had sworn that he would have nothing to do with the new story, as soon as the new story had been told to him; but it soon became apparent to him that he must have to do with it. As soon as the breath should be out of the old squire's body, some one must take possession of Tretton, and Mountjoy would be left in the house. In accordance with Mr. Grey's theory, Augustus would be the proper possessor. Augustus no doubt would go down and claim the ownership, — unless the matter could be decided to the satisfaction of them both beforehand. Mr. Grey thought that there was little hope of such satisfaction; but it would of course be for him or his firm to see what could be done. "That I should ever have got such a piece of business!" he said to himself. But it was at last settled among them that Mr. Barry should go to Rummelsburg. He had made the enquiry at Nice, and he would go on with it at Rummelsburg. Mr. Barry started, with Mr. Quaverdale, of St. John's, the gentleman whom Harry Annesley had consulted as to the practicability of his earning money by writing for the press. Mr. Quaverdale was supposed to be a German

scholar, and therefore had his expenses paid for him, with some bonus for his time.

A conversation between Mr. Barry and Mr. Quaverdale, which took place on their way home, shall be given, as it will be best to describe the result of their enquiry. This enquiry had been conducted by Mr. Barry's intelligence, but had owed so much to Mr. Quaverdale's extensive knowledge of languages, that the two gentlemen may be said, as they came home, to be equally well instructed in the affairs of Mr. Scarborough's property.

"He has been too many for the governor," said Barry. Mr. Barry's governor was Mr. Grey.

"It seems to me that Mr. Scarborough is a gentleman who is apt to be too many for most men."

"The sharpest fellow I ever came across, either in the way of a cheat or in any other walk of life. If he wanted any one else to have the property, he'd come out with something to show that the entail itself was all moonshine."

"But when he married again at Nice, he couldn't have quarrelled with his eldest son already. The child was not above four or five months old." This came from Quaverdale.

"It's my impression," said Barry, "that it was then his intention to divide the property, and that this was done as a kind of protest against primogeniture. Then he found that that would fail,—that if he came to explain the whole matter to his sons, they would not consent to be guided by him, and to accept a division. From what I have seen of both of them, they are bad to guide after that fashion. Then Mountjoy got frightfully into the hands of the money-lenders, and, in order to do them, it became necessary that the whole property should go to Augustus."

"They must look upon him as a nice sort of old man," said Quaverdale.

"Rather! But they have never got at him to speak a bit of their mind to him. And then how clever he was in getting round his own younger son! The property got into such a condition that there was money enough to pay the Jews the money they had really lent. Augustus, who was never quite sure of his father, thought it would be best to disarm them; and he consented to pay them, getting back all their bonds. But he was very uncivil to the squire,—told him that the sooner he died the better, or something of that sort;—and

then the squire immediately turned round and sprang this Rummelsburg marriage upon us, and has left every stick about the place to Mountjoy. It must all go to Mountjoy,—every acre, every horse, every bed, and every book.”

“And these, in twelve months’ time, will have been divided among the card-players of the metropolis,” said Quaverdale.

“We’ve got nothing to do with that. If ever a man did have a lesson he has had it. If he chose to take it, no man would ever have been saved in so miraculous a manner. But there can be no doubt that John Scarborough and Ada Sneyd were married at Rummelsburg, and that it will be found to be impossible to unmarry them.”

“Old Mrs. Sneyd, the lady’s mother, was then present,” said Quaverdale.

“Not a doubt about it,—and that Fritz Deutchmann was present at the marriage. I almost think that we ought to have brought him away with us. It would have cost a couple of hundred pounds, but the estate can bear that. We can have him by sending for him if we should want it.” Then, after many more words on the same subject and to the same effect, Mr. Barry went on to give his own private opinions. “In fact, the only blemish in old Scarborough’s plans was this;—that the Rummelsburg marriage was sure to come out sooner or later.”

“Do you think so? Fritz Deutchmann is the only one of the party alive, and it’s not probable that he would ever have heard of Tretton.”

“These things always do come out. But it does not signify now. And the world will know how godless and reprobate old Scarborough has been; but that will not interfere with Mountjoy’s legitimacy. And the world has pretty well understood already that the old man has cared nothing for God or man. It was bad enough according to the other story that he should have kept Augustus so long in the dark, and determined to give it all to a bastard by means of a plot and a fraud. The world has got used to that. The world will simply be amused by this other turn. And as the world generally is not very fond of Augustus Scarborough, and entertains a sort of good-natured pity for Mountjoy, the first marriage will be easily accepted.”

“There’ll be a lawsuit, I suppose,” said Quaverdale.

“I don’t see that they’ll have a leg to stand on. When the old man dies the property will be exactly as it would have been. This latter intended fraud in favour of Augustus will be understood as having been old Scarborough’s farce. The Jews are the party who have really suffered.”

“And Augustus?”

“He will have lost nothing to which he was by law entitled. His father might of course make what will he pleased. If Augustus was uncivil to his father, his father could of course alter his will. The world would see all that. But the world will be inclined to say that these poor money-lenders have been awfully swindled.”

“The world won’t pity them.”

“I’m not so sure. It’s a hard case to get hold of a lot of men and force them to lend you a hundred thousand pounds without security and without interest. That’s what has been done in this case.”

“They’ll have no means of recovering anything.”

“Not a shilling. The wonder is that they should have got the hundred thousand pounds. They never would have had it unless the squire had wished to pave the way back for Mountjoy. And then he made Augustus do it for him! In my mind he has been so clever that he ought to be forgiven all his rascality. There has been, too, no punishment for him, and no probability of punishment. He has done nothing for which the law can touch him. He has proposed to cheat people, but before he would have cheated them he might be dead. The money-lenders will have been swindled awfully, but they have never had any ground of tangible complaint against him. ‘Who are you?’ he has said; ‘I don’t know you.’ They alleged that they had lent their money to his eldest son. ‘That’s as you thought,’ he replied. ‘I ain’t bound to come and tell you all the family arrangements about my marriage!’ If you look at it all round it was uncommonly well done.”

When Mr. Barry got back he found that it was generally admitted at the chambers that the business had been well done. Everybody was prepared to allow that Mr. Scarborough had not left a screw loose in the arrangement—though he was this moment on his death-bed, and had been under surgical tortures and operations, and, in fact, slowly dying during the whole period that he had been thus busy. Everyone concerned in the matter seemed to admire Mr. Scarborough, except

Mr. Grey, whose anger, either with himself or his client, became the stronger, the louder grew the admiration of the world.

A couple of barristers very learned in the law were consulted, and they gave it as their opinion that from the evidence as shown to them there could be no doubt but that Mountjoy was legitimate. There was no reason in the least for doubting it, but for that strange episode which had occurred when, in order to get the better of the law, Mr. Scarborough had declared that at the time of Mountjoy's birth he had not been married. They went on to declare that on the squire's death the Rummelsburg marriage must of course have been discovered, and had given it as their opinion that the squire had never dreamed of doing so great an injustice either to his elder or his younger son. He had simply desired, as they thought, to cheat the money-lenders, and had cheated them beautifully. That Mr. Tyrrwhit should have been so very soft was a marvel to them; but it only showed how very foolish a sharp man of the world might be when he encountered one sharper.

And Augustus, through an attorney acting on his own behalf, consulted two other barristers,—whose joint opinion was not forthcoming quite at once, but may here be stated. Augustus was declared by them to have received at his father's hands a most irreparable injury, to such an extent that an action for damages would in their opinion lie. He had by accepting his father's first story altered the whole course of his life, abandoned his profession, and even paid large sums of money out of his own pocket for the maintenance of his elder brother. A jury would probably award him some very considerable sum,—if a jury could get hold of his father while still living. No doubt the furniture and other property would remain, and might be held to be liable for the present owner's laches. But these two learned lawyers did not think that an action could be taken with any probability of success against the eldest son, with reference to his tables and chairs, when the Tretton estates should have become his. As these learned lawyers had learned that old Mr. Scarborough was at this moment almost in articulo mortis, would it not be better that Augustus should apply to his elder brother to make him such compensation as the peculiarities of the case would demand? But as this opinion did not

reach Augustus till his father was dead, the first alternative proposed was of no use.

"I suppose, sir, we had better communicate with Mr. Scarborough," Mr. Barry said to his partner, on his return.

"Not in my name," Mr. Grey replied; "I've put Mr. Scarborough in such a state that he is not allowed to see any business letter. Sir William Brodrick is there now." But communications were made both to Mountjoy and to Augustus. There was nothing for Mountjoy to do; his case was in Mr. Barry's hands, nor could he take any steps till something should be done to oust him from Tretton. Augustus, however, immediately went to work and employed his counsel, learned in the law.

"You will do something, I suppose, for poor Gus?" the old man said to his son one morning. It was the last morning on which he was destined to awake in the world, and he had been told by Sir William and by Mr. Merton that it would probably be so. But death for him had no terror. Life to him, for many weeks past, had been so laden with pain as to make him look forward to a release from it with hope. But the business of life had pressed so hard upon him as to make him feel that he could not tell what had been accomplished. The adjustment of such a property as Tretton required, he thought, his presence, and, till it had been adjusted, he clung to life with a pertinacity which had seemed to be oppressive. Now Mountjoy's debts had been paid, and Mountjoy could be left a bit happier. But there had come latterly a claim upon him equally strong—that he should wreak his vengeance upon Augustus. Had Augustus abused him for keeping him in the dark so long, he would have borne it patiently. He had expected as much. But his son had ridiculed him, laughed at him, made nothing of him, and had at last told him to die out of the way. He would, at any rate, do something before he died.

He had had his revenge, very bitter of its kind. Augustus should be made to feel that he had not been ridiculous—not to be laughed at in his last days. He had ruined his son, inevitably ruined him, and was about to leave him penniless upon the earth. But now, in his last moments, in his very last, there came upon him some feeling of pity, and, in speaking of his son, he once more called him "Gus."

"I don't know how it will all be, sir; but if the property is to be mine——"

"It will be yours; it must be yours."

"Then I will do anything for him that he will accept."

"Do not let him starve, or have to earn his bread."

"Say what you wish, sir, and it shall be done, as far as I can do it."

"Make an offer to him of some income, and settle it on him. Do it at once." The old man, as he said this, was thinking probably of the great danger that all Tretton might before long have been made to vanish. "And, Mountjoy——"

"Sir."

"You have gambled surely enough for amusement. With such a property as this in your hands, gambling becomes very serious."

They were the last words—the last intelligible words—which the old man spoke. He died with his left hand on his son's neck, and Merton and his sister by his side.

He had contrived in spite of his great faults to create a respect in the minds of those around him which is itself a great element of love. But there was something in his manner which told of love for others. He was one who could hate to distraction, and on whom no bonds of blood would operate to mitigate his hatred. He would persevere to injure with a terrible persistency. But yet in every phase of his life he had been actuated by love for others. He had never been selfish, thinking always of others rather than of himself. Supremely indifferent he had been to the opinion of the world around him, but he had never run counter to his own conscience. For the conventionalities of the law he entertained a supreme contempt, but he did wish so to arrange matters with which he was himself concerned as to do what justice demanded. Whether he succeeded in the last year of his life the reader may judge. But certainly the three persons who were assembled around his death-bed did respect him, and had been made to love him by what he had done.

Merton wrote the next morning to his friend Henry Annesley respecting the scene. "The poor old boy has gone at last, and in spite of all his faults I feel as though I had lost an old friend. To me he has been most kind, and did I not know of all his sins I should say that he had been always loyal and always charitable. Mr. Grey condemns him, and all the world must condemn him. One cannot make an apology for him without being ready to throw all truth and all morality to the

dogs. But if you can imagine for yourself a state of things in which neither truth nor morality shall be thought essential, then old Mr. Scarborough would be your hero. He was the bravest man I ever knew. He was ready to look all opposition in the face, and prepared to bear it down. And whatever he did he did with the view of accomplishing what he thought to be right for other people."

FIRE FOUNTAINS.

MISS GORDON-CUMMING is as indefatigable in bookmaking as she is in travelling. Barely a year ago we wandered with her in a French man-of-war among the Summer Isles of Eden* of the South Pacific, winding up with a long sojourn amid the luxuriant verdure of Tahiti. This year she gives us two volumes about the Sandwich Isles, with their king, their dowager Queen Emma, their little mimicry of European institutions, their bishop, their cathedral that can't get itself built, their fast decaying population, and above all the big volcanoes of Hawaii.

How she got there shows her pluck and determination. She waited six months for a ship from Tahiti to Hawaii. Failing this she went in the little mail-packet of one hundred and sixty tons to San Francisco, having the mortification of being carried by contrary winds close to Niihau, one of the Sandwich group, peculiarly interesting to her because colonised by a Scotch family from New Zealand, and not being allowed to land, so much was her Danish captain in fear of French Government red-tape. While at San Francisco she used the time in seeing the Yosemite Valley, and making a little excursion across to Canton, Pekin, and Nagasaki, throwing in the ascent of Fuji-Yama as a matter of course, and returning to "Frisco" in time to witness the triumphal entry of General Grant. After a week's rest she was once more on the broad Pacific steaming away to Honolulu.

After the longest voyage Miss Gordon-Cumming is always ready to begin a long letter describing the first look of the new lands she has come to. In the Sandwich group this first look is not inviting. One lava-lump is much like another, except in colour. The bare red and brown rocks

*ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 29, p. 421, "Summer Isles of Eden."

remind her of Aden, of all places in the world. When you get on shore things look greener. Most of the tropical plants and fruits have been brought and flourish wonderfully in the volcanic soil. The sugar-cane, especially, is making the fortunes of scores of planters. But from the sea everything looks pale and bare compared with the luxuriant beauty of the Society Isles. There is no difference of climate to account for this. The one group is just twenty degrees south, the other twenty degrees north of the line. Yet not only is the dingy brown coral reef off Hawaii "as uninviting as anything of the nature of a reef can be," a strange contrast to the vision of delight formed by the wonderful blending of violet and emerald and gold in the Tahiti reef, but the very fish are less brilliantly coloured. "Gay, indeed, as compared with those of the Atlantic, but pale and wanting the gorgeous scarlet and cobalt and green of the South Pacific fishes."

In one thing the natives agree: they both delight in eating live fish, and are unable to see wherein it is worse than swallowing live oysters. One does not think of the cuttle-fish as a dainty, though they are to be seen along with sea urchins and other quaint creatures in Italian fish-markets; but the Hawaiians take their cuttle-fish raw, and those who have tasted both say that it is better that way than the best oysters. Miss Gordon-Cumming tells an ugly story of a lady of the old school who tried one a little too big—of the size that we call octopus. The creature showed fight, first deluging her face and neck with the contents of its ink-bag, then twining in her long hair the feelers which she had not yet devoured. But this dainty feeder was not discouraged, and while battling with her prey went on eating in a way that Victor Hugo's man in his death-struggle with the pieuvre would have done well to imitate.

In some of the arts of life the Hawaiians excel the people of Tahiti. For instance, both are good at feather-work, but that of the Hawaiians is far the better and more artistic, though in Tahiti it is used to dress up the gods, while in the Sandwich group it is the chiefs who wear feather garments. You may have noticed the helmets of red and yellow in the British Museum; you might think they were of old moth-eaten flannel, but they are of feathers, each separately fastened into a loop of fine

string, and fixed on a lining of delicate basket-work strong enough to resist a good stout blow. They look like the helmets of our old Horse Guards, or those one sees in pictures of Greek warriors. Is this graceful shape an invention of some native, or did Spaniards trade here in the old, old days, and were the imitative islanders incited to copy their casques? But then, as far as my knowledge goes, this helmet with the curved over-arching crest was never worn by Spaniard, nor by anyone except the old Greek and the English Horse Guard of two generations ago. The Spaniard might account for the feather cloak; but I don't think he can be made answerable for the helmet. I must leave the question among several others to which I have waited half a life to find answers.

What a cloak must be that of Kamehameha the Great, still worn at coronations, and kept by the king's sister as mistress of the robes—eleven feet wide and five feet long, one sheet of lustrous gold, made wholly of the sharp-pointed "royal feather," of which each Oo or royal bird has only two, one under each of its black wings. It takes a thousand feathers to make a lei or necklace—a poor affair, looking like frayed-out silk. Think how many must have been required for the royal cloak. And this really great king ordered the birds to be set free as soon as the feathers had been plucked (they were caught on poles, baited and smeared with bird-lime). He wished to save the breed, which seems dying out like the natives themselves, and like the sandalwood—so plentiful till just lately—and even the cocoa-palms and few stunted bread-fruits, which to Miss Gordon-Cumming, seemed universally smitten with disease, like the very rocks which are crumbling down faster, Miss Gordon-Cumming thinks, than wind and sun and rain ought to make them. Five for six shillings is the market-price of these feathers, so no crown-jewel was ever more costly than Kamehameha's cloak. There were others; but of these several were given to foreigners (who cared little for them) to be presented to their sovereigns; one, a square of six feet, was buried with the poor young king, Lunalilo. "He is the last of our race," said his weeping father. "It is his." Its money worth was about twenty thousand pounds.

It has been a sad thing for these islands to be on one of the world's highways. The people don't make any-

thing now, they buy American and European rubbish. Will it be so in Japan? Is the mission of modern civilisation to go round the world vulgarising and making all things alike, till human nature, sickened at the mean and monotonous ugliness, seeks refuge in the vagaries of æstheticism? Miss Gordon-Cumming mourns over the "whale-tooth necklaces," hair chains of a hundred or more of the very finest braids of human hair, with a hook-shaped ornament hanging from them. In Captain Cook's day, not one hundred years ago, these were common wear, and now they are rare in museums, and what the hook or crescent symbolises is only matter of conjecture.

One of Miss Gordon-Cumming's strangest experiences was on a little Hawaiian packet plying from Honolulu to Hilo Bay, on the way to the great volcano of Kilauea. The little craft was crowded with native passengers, all hopelessly sick, yet eating ravenously of poi (the sour adhesive paste of pounded taro root, eaten by putting in the finger and drawing it out with a dexterous twirl), of raw fish, roast pig, ditto dog, dried octopus, taro baked whole ("kalo" the Hawaiians pronounce it), and sweetmeats and wonderfully oily puddings in leaf wrappers. How they managed to sing as well as eat, it is hard to tell; perhaps they were not so sick as Miss Gordon-Cumming thought.

Hawaii, wholly volcanic, looks like a vast fortress ninety miles long, built up by the fire genii. Yet, dreary as it seems from the sea, it is really full of green pastures on which feed wild cattle, descendants of those brought in by Vancouver, and owned by ranchmen, to the tune of ten or fifteen thousand head apiece, on runs of twenty miles long. By-and-by, when the native is clean gone, and the rest of the world too thickly peopled, we shall have some Yankee speculator buying up Hawaii and turning it into a deer forest. Deer have been turned out on the neighbouring isle of Mauna Loa, and are doing well; and I am afraid the native must go.

Like all travellers, Miss Gordon-Cumming has a good deal to say about eating. A poi feast, served by men in blue shirts, white trousers, and necklaces of yellow flowers, and damsels in blue sacques and yellow flower leis (necklaces), begins with a lump of meat wrapped in taro tops (like very delicate spinach). Then come slices of cooked taro and other vegetables, and then

to every pair of guests a bowl of the pink poi, bowls of water for hand-washing being placed at intervals. These are necessary; for, at best, poi is as difficult to manage as treacle. You dip in your finger, give it a twirl, and then suck; and there is really nothing to annoy the most sensitive in the fact that two fingers go into the same bowl, for the stuff is so sticky it forms a complete envelope, and no particle that has touched one finger can ever escape back into the general mass. Possibly, if you are at a place where they do things in old-fashioned style, the meat is dog; for dog, fed on vegetables, is accounted more delicate than pork or kid; in old times every tenant had to rear a fixed number of dogs for his landlord's larder. On occasion of a royal visit we are told the *pièce de résistance* was four hundred baked dogs, cut up—knives being non-existent—with sharp-edged bits of newly-split bamboo.

But there is so much in Miss Gordon-Cumming's book that I must confine myself to the volcanic part. Strange that a small island should have the biggest volcanoes in the world, with craters which must look as imposing from the moon as those of the lunar volcanoes do to us.

Having no water on the moon, they can have no tidal-waves, an awkward form of volcanic action by which these isles are visited every now and then. One of these was connected with the terrible earthquake at Iquique in Peru, in May, 1877. They say that that wave did the eight thousand miles of sea at the rate of four hundred and fifty miles an hour, but I think there must be something wrong in the calculation. Forty years before happened the most terrible visitation on record. Just as at the old Lisbon earthquake the churches were crowded, so at Hilo ten thousand people had gathered for religious instruction. They had been at it all day, and were resting on the beach. It was a lovely evening, calm and sunny. Somebody noticed that Kilauea had been rather furious the night before; but that was Kilauea's normal state. Suddenly the sea retreated; and the people, thinking it fun, ran down, picking up the stranded fish as they went; but all of a sudden a wave twenty feet high came rushing in at eight miles an hour, and dashing over the village broke with a noise which, one of the missionaries said, was as if a mountain had fallen on the beach. Everybody on the beach was swept out to sea; many even

of these amphibious people were drowned; many more would have sunk exhausted, but that a whaler, anchored in the bay, was able to save some.

No wonder sea-waves and any other force of disturbance should be frequent where craters twenty-five miles in circumference are found in mountains fourteen thousand feet high. Down one of these, called Halemaumau, the "house of everlasting burning," you can walk and see the working of the central fire visibly displayed before you. "Billows of molten lava," "tossing fire-spray," "fiery rivers," "a Mississippi of molten fire," are some of Miss Gordon-Cumming's phrases. The gentle slope up the mountain side is like a fire-glacier broken in crevasses, through which the uncooled and still moving lava mass is seen, just as down a moulin on the mer de glace you see the river rushing by underneath. Yet, wherever the soil has begun to decompose, a crop at once begins to spring up, either of candle-nut with silvery leaves, or of mountain taro, or of the ohelo, a sort of flame-coloured whortleberry, sacred, because of its colour, to the goddess of the volcano. This terrible goddess Pélé, with a host of cousins and aunts, bears sway among the fires, and has still such a hold on the people, that the very day Miss Gordon-Cumming visited the big crater of Kilauea her guide picked up three and a half dollars which had been flung in—but not quite far enough—by a party that had been there in the morning. The staple offerings used to be whole hogs; which, when the eruption threatened to be very destructive, were thrown in by the dozen. In the great outbreak of 1800, when a bay was filled up, and a headland four miles long formed by the lava, nothing could stop the flow till Kamehameha the Great made a solemn pilgrimage to the top, and in presence of his chiefs and priests cut off his own sacred hair and flung it into the torrent. In 1881, a good many Christians showed that their Christianity was not proof against Pélé's terrors. One old man, Keoni Holo (John Hall), owned about twelve acres near Hilo, and had turned them into a productive garden. When the flood came down he stood before it, offering his pet pig, throwing in chickens, fruit, a lock of his hair, and piteously appealing to the goddess. All in vain, the tide of fire came on, and rolled over taro patch, orchard, and homestead, leaving instead a burning floor of coiled and twisted lava.

It must have been sad to stand by and see a forest burnt up like so many matches, and another with the trees snapped off at the surface of the fire-flood, the portion embedded in the lava being burned to dust, and leaving a series of pock-marks on the hardened surface. Miss Gordon-Cumming felt special pity for the lovely bird's-nest and other ferns; her eruption, however, must have been child's play compared with that of which she heard from Mr. Cave, one of the missionaries. One night in 1852, it seemed as if a solitary star was shining on the side of Mauna Loa, at a spot afterwards found to be four thousand feet below the summit. After the second evening it seemed to die away, but soon burst out again with amazing splendour, no longer a star, but a column of fire, seven hundred feet high by angular measurement, and from two to three hundred broad, which was visible a hundred miles off, and the ashes and charred leaves from which covered the decks of approaching ships. The lava stream was visible thirty miles off; and in twenty days there had been thrown up a cone a mile round at the base, and four hundred feet high, which is standing to this day. The weird beauty of the colour-changes was something past belief. Issuing white-hot from the crater, the lava changed first to light, then to deep red, then to glossy grey, with shining black patches, every tint intermingled in constant movement, and a very cataract of sparks falling from the fire-pillar. In 1855 there was a yet greater eruption, from which the town of Hilo narrowly escaped. One strange episode was when a cataract of lava poured over a precipice into a very deep rock-basin, in which a big ship might have floated. The water was all driven off in steam, the basin filled up, and the precipice changed into a gently sloping plane. Months after it was a hideous sight to see this lava-stream about fifty miles from its source, sluggishly twisting about in vast coils, whose lustrous metallic surface was seamed with red, showing the uncooled stream below, while every now and then the glistening crust which hung over this fire-stream caved in just as "cat's-ice" breaks and shows the water underneath it.

In 1868, by way of a change, there was a ten days' earthquake, "the trees thrashing as if torn by a mighty wind, the people sitting on the ground, bracing with hands and feet to keep from rolling

over." Along with this was a landslide and a mud-eruption which, going at the rate of a mile a minute, buried thirty-one human beings, and nearly one thousand cattle and goats. Of course there was an earthquake-wave which swept away a few hundred houses along the coast, and the tale of horrors was completed by a jet of fire which, four days after the earthquake began, shot up crimson lava and red-hot rocks to a height of five or six hundred feet. From this poured down a flood, fluid as water and blood-red, which tossed and roared like the rapids of Niagara, throwing off streams in various directions, and the main body, nearly a mile wide, falling over a precipice five hundred feet high.

At the foot of this lay a grassy plain, round which the flood divided, rolling on to the sea, and imprisoning a number of cattle, which were driven mad with thirst, heat, and smoke. Another branch poured right on to a house in which seven people were asleep; when they woke next morning they found themselves in an island of about half an acre, the stream having parted some hundred yards above the house, and reunited just below. They were imprisoned ten days, nearly dying of hunger and thirst, and constantly on the watch to turn aside small lava streams which crept like fiery snakes right under their grass hut. When they were rescued, "What did you do?" someone asked. "Na pule nui maheu" (we prayed much) they replied. This eruption destroyed four thousand acres of the best land in the island, besides a vast tract of unimproved land.

Nine years after the chief feature of the eruption was submarine; flames burst up through the sea, and jets of steam. A ship thought they were signals of distress, and coming to help was rewarded by a boatload of fine fish ready cooked. The accompaniment to this was a volume of smoke, sixteen thousand feet high, darkening the heavens by day for one hundred square miles, and at night so radiant that the whole island shone red.

Of course all the group is volcanic; but in some of the isles the fires seem wholly extinct. In Maui, for instance, the tradition is that more than two thousand years ago some mighty outburst blew off the entire top of the mountain Haleakala (home of the sun) as the steam blows the lid off a kettle, leaving a crater, "a cyclopean pie dish," nearly thirty

miles round, two thousand feet deep, ten thousand feet above the sea level, full of cones, some of them seven hundred feet high, and blessed with a couple of springs of fresh water. Here and there in this crater grows the mysterious plant called "the silver sword," built up cabbage fashion of layers of leaves that seem like frosted silver, and bearing a blossom like a purple sunflower. This will soon be extinct, for a San Francisco company, with a German manager, is taking this rich lava soil in hand, and, thanks to the springs, hopes soon to make it a vast sugar-field. Miss Gordon-Cumming managed, in spite of a thick white mist, to make a good sketch of this crater, and afterwards her picture reminded her, as it will remind her readers, of the craters we see in photographs of the moon, only some of them are over one hundred and twenty miles across, and—there being no lunar atmosphere—can never grow either "silver swords" or sugar-cane.

You must go to the book itself, if you want more about fire-floods and lava-streams over which dance lights of deepest red, mingled with blue, green, and white, the roar being like that of heavy artillery. The strangest thing is that, in the eruption of 1881, just when it seemed as if nothing could save Hilo, and the Chinamen, having burnt all their joss-sticks to the fire demon, came in a body to church, to test the power of the Christian's God, while all sects joined in a grand day of humiliation, at the very hour of evening service the flood, which had been pouring on for nine months, suddenly ceased, and did not advance a foot further.

Miss Gordon-Cumming's book is not all volcanoes. She tells very graphically how the islands were Christianised, and what terrible difficulties the missionaries had to overcome from those who ought to have been their helpers. English and American whalers had made of these ill-fated islands a sort of marine Ratcliff Highway, or New York Bowery. Having been Edens, they became dens of drunkenness and foul vice; and Jack, foreseeing that Miss Kahekili baptised as Sister Katherine would not be such an easy victim to his fascinations, and that Kaeo become Brother Charles would not be ready to provide unlimited taro-spirit in exchange for gunpowder, tried all he could to bring the missions into discredit. He, the Devil's missionary, who had been filling the isles with debauchery and

disease, actually laid the outbreaks of sickness, which were due to the life of which he had set the example, to the charge of the white prayer-men; and when this would not do, he actually tried to subvert by force the good order which the missionaries were bringing about. And in this he was, shameful to tell, abetted by white men in authority.

Perhaps the ugliest caricature of "modern progress and civilisation" which the world has ever seen, is the story of the French and English bullying the poor native converts, to try to force them back into license and drunkenness, and vying with each other in browbeating the king and chiefs, while the sailors ruined the morals of the people, and the compulsory abolition of spirit-dues flooded the land with cheap liquor. Happily not all whites were equally bad. In the old sinful reaction against good in 1829, Captain Jones of the *Peacock*, and Captain Finch of the *Vincennes*, both American war-ships, exerted themselves against the evil-doers. Finch brought a message from the President to the king; and owing to his moral support, scoundrel Charlton had to pay the fine which had been laid on him for riot and law-breaking. There were other relapses, all traceable to "white devils." When the young king, for instance, who had sworn against all kinds of strong drink, was invited to a feast on ship-board, he resisted all the known drinks, pleading his vow. At last they brought out cherry-brandy, and persuaded him it was a non-intoxicant. He became mad-drunk, and in company with his white friends began a wild orgie, in which, unhappily, he carried the great mass of his people with him.

By-and-by they got ashamed of themselves; and in 1842, political troubles having been added to the moral, the French and English consuls combining to set the king at defiance, Commodore Kearney of the *States*, and our own Admiral Thomas, came and set things right; and, at last, Charlton got his dismissal from the home government.

I don't think any one who reads Miss Gordon-Cumming will laugh at missionaries any more. She is quite alive to the weaknesses of these good folks; but one can forgive a great deal in men and women who go with their lives in their hand, and the result of whose labour is that, whereas of old a coaster would find village after village drunk with the rum left by the last coaster

that went by, the remnant, which this flood of immorality poured in on them by the whites has left, is now at least as well-behaved as English people.

It is an ugly story, the influence of white "culture" on this poor race which deserved a better fate.

Miss Gordon-Cumming tells of other things: of Queen Emma and her rival King Kalakua, both of whom have been great travellers, the latter, in fact, having seen almost every crowned head from the Pope to the Mikado. The present hope of the realm is a little girl, twice crossed with white blood; to the original strain of sailor Young, Queen Emma's grandfather, being added that of her father, the Hon. A. S. Cleghorn, husband of Princess Like Like (nobility in these isles follows the female line). She has as many names as a German Serene Highness, beginning with Victoria and ending with Lapa, lapa.

There is plenty more in these two volumes; the account, for instance, of how a fussy Scotch Episcopal consul managed to make the King and Queen ashamed of the good old chapel which had stood a bulwark in those trying times against "white devils," and to get over a bishop and thereby cause a lot of heart-burning. In fact there is everything in these books, even an account of the Leper island (leprosy of the most frightful kind being one of the scourges civilisation has introduced), where a young French priest, Father Damien, has nobly given himself up to about the saddest and most depressing work that the world has to offer.

However, you had better go to the book yourselves; it is as lively as any novel, hurrying the reader in a brisk dance from dolmens and feather-cloaks and heathen ceremonies, to chiefs defying the volcano-goddess in proof of their having truly turned Christian; lava streams; waterfalls of liquid fire; drunken consuls; sugar-planting Germans; rascally skippers cheating about sandal-wood; fowls swathed in black and put under calabashes lest they should cackle and so break "the great tabu;" cattle-ranches; girls riding Mexican saddles with leis of flowers round their necks and shoulders; mean whites who steal a native's oranges—which are his whole living, keeping up, thereby, the incredible meanness of the early navigators (Captain Cook among them), who gave a few old nails for a ship-load of pigs, poultry, and vegetables; surf-swimmers (the

only remnant of the old joyous days which white villainy made impossible). Altogether Miss Gordon-Cumming's is a delightful book, which all who read will thank me for having introduced them to.

THE FAIRIES' KNOWE.

"WHEN the dew is on the moorland, and the moon is on the hill,
When the castle gates are closing, and the hum of life is still,

When they draw the heavy curtains in the stately oriel room,
And the lamps in muffled lustre, glimmer ghostly through the gloom,

Will you meet me,

Come to meet me,

Gliding by the tall yew hedges, gliding by the river's flow;

Will you come to meet me, darling, at the Fairies' Knowe?"

"But my father loves my singing, as the harpsichord I touch,

And he needs me, just to listen to the lore he loves so much;

Reading in the grim old folio, opened when the lamps are lit,

And I hide away my yawning as we linger over it!

Can I meet you,

Come to meet you,

When such kindly eyes are watching by the fir-logs' ruddy glow;

Can I leave my warm home shelter for the Fairies' Knowe?"

"But the music of your whisper is the melody I prize,

And no page has half the wisdom that is written in your eyes;

Let the chords for once lie idle, close for once the old dead line,

Life and Love have richer meanings waiting for your glance and mine;

If you'll meet me,

Only meet me,

Where no jealous guard can follow, where no spying footsteps go,

If you'll come to meet me, darling, at the Fairies' Knowe."

"But my nurse has often told me evil spirits haunt that spot,

Ghosts of some remembered horror, that they hint, but utter not;

And that black misfortune hovers brooding in the sullen air,

And no maiden ever prospers that has held a trysting there;

Dare I meet you,

Come to meet you,

When they warn me of the magic that has twined around me so,

When I feel some danger lurking at the Fairies' Knowe?"

But he lured her with his whisper, and he soothed her fears to rest,

And he kissed the blue eyes hidden, laughing, weeping on his breast,

And she stole, the old man's darling, through the postern in the night,

While the screech-owl hooted o'er her, and the bandog wailed her flight;

Stole to meet him,

Once to meet him!

But the darkened home that missed her saw the seasons come and go,

Yet never found the flower that left them for the Fairies' Knowe.

Soon the vaults that held his sires, opened yet again for him,

The father whose fair child forsook him as his light burnt low and dim;

And a dark and passionate story gathered slowly round her name,

Till it grew a note of warning, blent with sorrow and with shame;

And men whispered,

Shrank and whispered,

How, at midnight, shuddering watchers hear a sound of wailing low,

As of fear and late repentance, sobbing round the Fairies' Knowe.

MONSIEUR LE PASTEUR.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

SERVICE was over. The last hymn had been sung with all the vigour of mountain lungs; the last wooden shoe had clattered down the paved aisle; the last voice had died away on the still, pine-scented air, and then the minister lifted his sad young face off the worn cushion of the high narrow pulpit, and came slowly down the steps into the church.

Outside, among the hills, the sunshine lay in belts from peak to peak, and the Sabbath stillness was unbroken save for the hum of bees or the far off slumberous twitterings of birds; but the four white-washed walls of the ugliest building in the whole canton held only straight-backed pine-wood pews, homely and inartistic, and square ill-fitting windows that dimmed the daylight without owning the power to exclude chill draughts or keen north-easters.

The minister sighed as he lifted his hat off the little deal table fronting the pulpit, and went slowly out into the sunshine. Perhaps the unloveliness of his surroundings forced itself with scarcely-recognised intrusiveness on his notice; perhaps his thoughts, following his heart, had escaped his control, and were far away.

On the narrow path between the patches of scanty turf belonging to the still churchyard among the pines, the old sexton paced slowly, sunning himself in sabbatical solemnity.

"You are waiting to lock up, Carton?"

"Yes, sir."

"There was a very good congregation to-day."

"Very, sir."

"It is lovely weather even for August."

"Yes, indeed, sir."

Having uttered the familiar words of salutation which, week in, week out, scarcely varied, the minister passed on between the lowly graves that lay to either

side of him, and approached the high-road.

He was a man of seven or eight and twenty, or thereabouts, slight, dark, delicate-looking, with an indefinable something about him speaking of culture and scholarship—a something odd and out of place in the remote little parish on the upper ranges of the habitable Alps, where a score or two of peasants loved him and called him "M. le Pasteur." Of course they did not understand him, but thorough comprehension in not an essential of reverence, and they understood enough to know that he was very wise and learned, and so far above them that he must be very close to heaven. They were a little afraid of him, of course, but that was only right and fitting—far more afraid of him than the children were, who took him flowers, and their best wood-carvings, and pieces of honey, when such things could be spared for presents by careful mothers at home.

Chased by the unusual warmth of that summer day, the mists had shrunk and shrivelled into obscure corners of the valley. In the higher air a score of larks carolled joyously; from the neglected turf on the quiet graves the bright-eyed daisies raised their innocent faces smilingly.

Nature was fair there for once, and yet he shivered as he looked around him. Did not even the beauty speak of loss, and isolation, and death?

"You have kept me here so long! I thought you were never coming."

"Did you wait for me?"

"Yes."

"How good of you! I never thought of that."

He had lifted his hat hurriedly, and was standing bare-headed before the girl who had addressed him.

"We shall part for good so soon, and you have avoided us so much of late, that I must make occasions of seeing you."

"You are very kind."

"Kind to myself, yes. Do you think I am so little grateful as to owe you all I do without—loving you somewhat in return?"

Loving him! She had said the word quite simply, translating into her sweet hesitating French, yet he quivered as needlessly and stupidly as though he had misunderstood.

He muttered something in his throat, not looking at her, but at the ghostly mists in the valley.

"Do you know why I waited for you here?" she went on, looking at him with mingled laughter and sorrow in her sweet blue English eyes. "Because it was here I met you first, and here it seems fitting somehow to talk with you last when I am so sorry. It is nearly a year since we came here, mother and I, and took possession of you, because we were strangers, and you were the only civilised inhabitant in our newly-discovered territory. And you were so kind—do you remember? I knew at once that I should like you, though I did not guess how dear everything here would grow."

He could not speak. He was leaning on the rustic gate, with his haggard face resting on his hand and his eyes averted.

"And you took us to the sweet old château—do you remember?—and told us you knew Madame la Baronne, and that she would let us have her house while she was in Italy. And do you remember how anxious mother was that you should be quite sure we were not adventuresses, and how she referred you to the ambassador at Berne, and how you set all explanation aside with the perfect courtesy that is only learned in the schools of France?"

"I remember something of all this."

"But I am sure you don't remember all the pleasure you gave; how you used to read to us by the fire and play the organ to us in the old hall, and teach us to forget all the joy and pain of England."

"Don't!"

He raised his hand with a gesture as though he would avert a blow. And the vague sadness in his face had expressed itself at last, and it was pain.

How cruel she was in her sweet kindness, how cruel to remind him of all he had gained, of all he was so soon to lose! Ah, those dear dead days in which she had been all the world to him, those long bright evenings in the old, shadowy, fragrant rooms of the castle, amid the mellow lights of the wide hearth and the many-armed chandeliers; with the organ beneath his fingers interpreting all he felt, and the glow from the fire falling on her face and finding out the dimple in her cheek, the sweet curves of her neck, or the fragrant blossoms that rose and fell with every breath she drew! How cruel she was to recall it all, as he stood here in the chill sunshine, while shadowy hands beckoned her away from him!

"Is there anything the matter?"

"I am weary—that is all."

"So I thought to-day, and that is another reason why I wished to speak with you. You looked ill during service, and your sermon was strange—not glad as when I knew you first, but only resigned, as though you were trying to suffer and be strong. You are not unhappy?"

"Oh no."

"Because, if you are, no one will be sorrier than I, no one having so much right. You have done so much for me," she went on with a little quiver of the lips; "you have made the world seem tolerable after I had grown so weary of it. You have taught me strength for the acceptance of pain and the doing of duty. But for you I should never have had courage to go back to England."

He laughed harshly and mirthlessly.

"Then I have sent you away."

"I think so."

"That is so like my fate."

"What do you mean?"

"When you go away my sun will have set; all my future will be spent in darkness then."

She shrank away from him, and the sweet roses in her cheeks paled a little.

"I did not mean to tell you," he went on. "The knowledge will pain you, and do me no good. But you have come to me in my weakest hour, and so I must speak. I love you, have loved you always since I knew you. It seemed to me once that Heaven had sent you here, being satisfied with all I had tried to do, so I threw the reins on the neck of my heart and let it go, but I question if I could have restrained it in any case. There, now, the murder is out. I think I shall die when you have left me."

"Oh no, you will not, M. de la Roche; there is much of life left when love is over. But all the same I am very sorry that I have brought you pain like this."

Her lips quivered as she spoke, and two tears fell slowly down her face.

"Do not weep. Where there is no self-reproach there should be no sorrow. I never thought you would learn to love me. All that I did hope and believe was that you would be near me always, and that I might, unhindered, see your face at times."

"And I would stay if I could, for the thought of England is a load on my heart; but there are other girls at home, and my brothers, and it seems wrong that I

should chain my mother here because I am a coward."

He did not say that there was a way out of her difficulty, that if she could stay for him she could stay with him; having no hope he had no boldness.

"You believe I am sorry, don't you?" she said, looking up at him with wet eyes; "you believe that if I had dreamed of this I should have avoided you, as you have avoided me; and you will say you forgive me before we part, and you will come and see us at times till I leave; and you will write to me and let me know when you are happy again?"

"Oh yes, if you wish."

"Then good-bye for to-day."

"Good-bye; forgive me if I let you go down to the château alone. I feel as if I could not be in your presence and refrain from pleading."

He held both her hands, looking down on her, and then he said huskily: "Will you kiss me? I never thought to kiss a woman till you came. Now—well, I think I have a right to that at least."

She raised her sweet face to his, trembling, and he kissed her, as we kiss the dead.

And then he turned, and went slowly up the hillside alone.

CHAPTER II.

"MOTHER, I have something so odd, and strange, and sorrowful to tell you."

"What is it, dear?"

Mrs. Carrington lifted her eyes from the Tauchnitz novel she was reading, and looked at her daughter standing in the circle of the firelight on the hearth.

"It is something that makes me feel at once honoured and ashamed, proud and sorrowful."

"Well, what is it?"

The girl came close to the chintz-covered couch on which her mother lay, with a coloured Afghan-rug over her knees—for to Mrs. Carrington the mountain air was always chill—and stood there hesitating.

"Is it news from home?"

"Oh no; it is only this: M. de la Roche loves me."

"Dear Connie, I am so glad."

"Why, mother?"

"Because he is a good man and a gentleman, and I am sure he will make you happy."

"Darling mother, you surely have not forgotten?"

"No; but I think it is quite time you

had, Connie. I am ashamed to think that you should ever cast a backward thought on Frank Dalby, shamefully as he behaved. He is not worth remembering."

"Perhaps not; but still I cannot forget him," the girl answered, crying softly with her hands clasped about her knees, and her fair hair tumbled over her forehead.

Mrs. Carrington rose and came over beside her daughter, and drew the fair troubled face on to her breast. "You were always my favourite child," she said huskily, "the first and the dearest, and I have tried always to do for you the best that I knew. I have no interest in life that is not bound up with your happiness. I have been your slave and servant ever since your undeserved sorrow came. Do I not, therefore, merit a little thanks and consideration?"

"You do, and I am trying all I can to please you; is it not for your sake that I have consented to go back to Farnleigh?"

"Yes; but now I want something more of you."

"What is it?" There came the hunted look of a brave animal into the girl's blue eyes as she spoke.

"It is that you try to love M. le Pasteur. Oh, indeed it will not be difficult, Connie, if you only try. He is so good, so true a gentleman, so grand a Christian; and then you would make him so happy."

"It would seem like sacrilege, and it would not be fair to him," the girl answered below her breath.

"Quite fair when he knows all." She rested her face against her mother's knee for an instant, and then she looked up, smiling sadly through her tears.

"Two years ago, had I loved M. le Pasteur, and desired to marry him, you would have thought me mad."

"Yes; because two years ago I was proud and foolish;" but in her heart the mother was thinking: "Two years ago your life was unspoiled, now there are only fragments left for its rebuilding."

"Could it be right to marry him?"

That was the question the girl sat asking herself over and over as the wind rose and whistled among the pines. Once she would have thought it wicked to do so, but now if it would make him happy, and if he chose her, knowing the truth—— That kiss which he had placed on her lips an hour before had convinced her that she cared for him, not with that proud, shy fondness of that long ago love, but with a tenderness that perhaps was as worthy of him.

And then to be here always with him and the simple mountain-folk, while she faded from the minds of her English friends and was forgotten! That would be pleasant. She loved the blue valleys, the misty heights, the silvery music of the cow-bells, and the simple faces that smiled on her with mingled awe and admiration. Yes, she could be happy here, not in the old, full-bodied, triumphant way, but far happier than by any other coming possibility.

She sat smiling at the firelight, and the tears had dried from off her face, and then she turned to her mother. "He will never ask me again; he took as final all I said to-day; if I mean to marry him I must ask him," she said.

So Mrs. Carrington knew that, half unconsciously, Connie had made up her mind.

The long evening passed, and he did not come, and the salon was dull without him, though Connie feigned not to miss him, and made vague imitations of his favourite music on the organ, and travestied his reading aloud by the fire. And in the morning he did not appear either, though the world donned her fairest aspect, and the edelweiss that he had given Connie a day or two before, to bring her good fortune, raised its petals afresh as though it had taken a new lease of life.

"He is breaking his promise of coming to me, the wicked man," she said to herself; "then I must go for him and bring him here, and make my recantation."

She put on her little hat, and tied a soft silk scarf round her slender throat; and then she looked at herself in the mirror with a little interest and pity.

Would they live at the château when they were married? she wondered, going slowly upwards through the gloom that the pines held always in their embrace. Or would he take her to the little wooden parsonage-house with its balconied windows and verandah? For the first time in her life the thought that she was something of an heiress gave her pleasure. Her money would tend a little to make Henri de la Roche happy, and it was long since she had genuinely believed him the best man under the sun. He was as high above that other man as the stars; but she sighed a little as she admitted this, perhaps because she was too earthly to be entirely sympathetic with a star.

"Of course I must tell him everything," she thought, advancing slowly, with bent head. "I wonder will he mind very much—

I wonder will he mind enough to refuse to have me then !”

The idea startled her so that she stood still a moment to think it over. It was quite possible that he might think what she had to tell so sad, not to say shameful, that he might cease to love her because of it. Well, that would not be her fault, she meant well, and she would tell the truth, and the end of it all was no longer within her power.

She was a little saddened, as though a meditated kindness had been already rejected, but that thought did not hinder her—indeed, nerved her rather to the effort that was before her. “If I tell him I shall try to love him, the choice will then be with him,” she said, and went slowly forward till she heard the pebbles on the path above her crunch beneath descending feet, and saw a shadow fall athwart her passage.

“Monsieur, mon ami !” She extended both her hands to him, and stood before him rosy as the dawn, beautiful as embodied womanhood.

“Where were you going ?”

“To look for you.”

“I am here.” He looked so worn and haggard that his aspect struck her with a new consciousness of pain.

“I came to meet you, because I have many things to tell and ask you,” she said with a gravity that made him tremble.

“About what ?”

“About you and me, and all you said yesterday.”

“What did I say ? Some folly, I suppose, to make you sorry ?”

“Oh no ; something to make me feel very honoured, something to compel a confidence of mine in return.”

She sat down on a boulder that jutted over the pathway as she spoke, and he dropped at her feet, with his face resting on his hands and his eyes averted.

If he would not look at her, would not speak to her, how could she say the strange thing she had come prepared with ?

“I told you once that I had no heart. Do you remember ?”

“Yes.”

“And you did not ask the reason ?”

“No ; friendship receives confidences, it never seeks them.”

“Then you do not care to know anything about me ?”

“Nothing but what you wish to tell.”

Why did he not help her a little ? why

did he oblige her so remorselessly to go on ?

“Then I wish to tell you I was going to be married once.”

“I thought as much.”

“The man was—I don’t know what he was, but he suited me, that is why he has been hard to forget. If he had been greater, perhaps I should have loved him less, for I am not great. But I did love him. I never could give such a love to another.”

He shivered a little, lying at her feet, but he did not speak.

“We were to have been married. I was very happy. Everything had gone smoothly, every one was pleased. The wedding-day came, and his brother, a pastor like you, was to marry us. I went to the church in all my bravery of bridal finery with my bridesmaids and my friends, but he did not come to meet me. I never saw him from then till now.”

Her voice had faltered, but it was the man’s face that was quite white.

“And what did it mean ?”

“I don’t know, I never heard. He sent me a note that night by a messenger. It only said he was miserable, and begged me to forget him. When I knew that no accident had kept him away from me, that he was alive and well, I left home with my mother, that, among new scenes, I might learn to forget.”

“And have you succeeded ?”

“Yes, in a measure, so far that I can make a statement quite truthfully, and offer you something quite honestly.”

“And what is that ?”

She blushed, and her eyes fell.

“You have told me you love me.”

“And it is true, God knows how true !”

“Then in that case, if it would make you happier to have me with you always as your wife, I shall stay.”

He was sitting upright now, white as marble in the growing darkness.

“You would remain with me always as my wife, far from all the pleasant things that have made your world so fair ? Do you mean that ?”

“Yes.”

“Then you must love me.”

“Perhaps I do unknowingly ; at least I am sure I shall love you one day.”

He had roused her to a warmth of which she had deemed herself incapable. She had come to him conscious of her own generosity, and now she was actually eager that he should take her at her word.

His face had changed, it glowed so that it seemed quite beautiful.

"I am not worthy. Heaven is too good," he said, taking off his hat as though he were in a sanctuary.

She was awed. Did she merit a love like this?

"I shall try to make you happy—try with all my heart," she said, her lips quivering.

She did not understand him, she would never understand him as long as she lived. Instead of answering her he dropped on his knees beside her, and hid his face in her dress, sobbing.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

WESTMORELAND.

No natural boundary divides the lake district of Cumberland from that of Westmoreland, and when they were parting the country into shire ground—the indefinite "they" who are responsible for the division, whether Alfred the Great or any of his predecessors or successors, great or small—they might just as well have put the two counties into one. And while they were about it, that corner of Lancashire might have been added, which, except for the colour of it on the maps, cannot be recognised as Lancashire at all, the country of Windermere and Coniston, once ruled by the great Abbey of Furness. These divisions having, however, been established before our time, the conscientious chronicler is forced to respect them; and thus we find ourselves at Dunmail Raise, about to cross the county border into Westmoreland, along the long-established track that traverses the heart of the lake-country—the track alike of Roman legionaries marching to relieve the scattered forts among the hills, of invading Saxons, or plundering Danes—of the strings of post-horses, too, bearing away the mineral spoils of the land, and later still, of the four-horse mail that rattled along so merrily up and down the hills.

Here, if tradition is to be believed, once was fought a great battle between the men of the hills and an invading force of Northumbrians, and the Raise, or tumulus, is said to mark the grave of Dunmail, the patriot chieftain, who was overthrown and slain by the fierce Saxon. And perhaps the name really does commemorate some Maelgwyn or Malcolm—some chief of the ruddy-locks who held the hill fort to the

last, and whose grave was crowned by the heap of stones that every passer-by might help to raise. But from this ancient vantage-ground of Dunmail the road descends gently towards Grasmere, the scene developing in beauty at every turn, till the lake appears the most perfect jewel of a lake perhaps anywhere to be found—in all the colour and charm of beautiful Nature—lying in the lap of the rugged hills.

Surely a fitting home for poets—a haunt beloved of the muses; and here, beneath the yews in Grasmere churchyard, lies Wordsworth, with his faithful wife sleeping beside him, and beyond Hartley Coleridge. Poor Hartley, as every one who knew him called him.

You may picture poor Hartley's funeral as Miss Martineau describes it—the grey head of Wordsworth bending over the open-grave. And Wordsworth himself had chosen the site of the grave, having first, with the help of the old sexton, marked out space for himself and his wife. A happy lot, one would think, to live and die at Grasmere, and there be buried—and in such company. And yet if such a thought enters the mind, the real history of Hartley Coleridge would drive it away.

Here is the sad contrast between all the brightest promises of early life and the most melancholy issue. Poets rocked him in his cradle. His father—then in the full bloom of literary promise—his father, reverting to his own childhood, spent among roofs and chimneys, sees his infant brought up in the kindest communion with Nature:

But thou, my babe, shall wander like a breeze,
By lakes and sandy shores,

and Wordsworth apostrophises him: "To H. C., six years old."

O! blessed vision, happy child!
That art so exquisitely wild.

Except for the few years of his University career, gaining a fellowship, but losing it through his besetting infirmity, Hartley Coleridge spent his life among these Cumbrian hills. A strange figure, almost like one of the mountain elves, very small, with a wild, unshaven, weather-beaten face and flashing eyes, and latterly with his long hair turned completely white. He abode about Grasmere, and afterwards on Rydal Water, Nab Cottage; always with a home provided by the care of loving friends, looked after by a kindly woman of the dale, and latterly by a young farmer and his wife. Often he wandered away, as if driven by some pursuing Mænad, into

distant vales, the young farmer trudging patiently after him and bringing him back stupefied and almost unconscious. And you will trace in his poems—a poet, too, he is of no mean order—you will trace the regret, the sigh from the heart, of the man; not that he had lived amiss, but that he had hardly lived at all—his hair grey, his sands nearly run out, and yet neither child nor man.

There is something sad in the latter days of this literary colony of lake-land; when the charm is wound up, and Harriet Martineau comes to chronicle its decrepit end, with the keen and cynic eye of common-sense.

But in its outset how charming it must have been when De Quincey, for instance, travelling post with Mrs. Coleridge and the youngsters, Hartley among them, drew up at Wordsworth's cottage by Grasmere. The last of these youngsters, Derwent Coleridge, is just dead at the time of writing these lines, in ripe old age, and so is lost the last link between the lake-land of the poets and this present workaday world. Wordsworth, then in full life and vigour, and his wife, "A perfect woman nobly planned," with her children about her knees, and the sister, Dora Wordsworth, full of impetuous vitality, and a poetess without the full gift of utterance. And the whole party start to visit Southey on foot, or in a common country-cart. Southey, who is more grandly lodged at Greta Hall by Keswick, some thirteen miles away. It is this cottage at Grasmere which De Quincey afterwards inhabited, and not the more elaborate residence at Rydal Mount, that seems to us most redolent of poetic memories. At Rydal you have Wordsworth digging and delving, and laying out terraces, and a little bit his own showman, and with such a rush of gaping people to the show—five hundred, it is computed every season, of utter strangers were received by Wordsworth, besides thousands more who, unprovided with credentials, could only stare through the bars of a commonplace gate, and pass on. And the last glimpse we have of Wordsworth is through the keen and cynic eyes above-mentioned. "In winter in his cloak, his Scotch bonnet, and green goggles, attended, perhaps, by half-a-score of cottagers' children, the youngest pulling at his cloak or holding by his trousers, while he cuts ash switches out of the hedge for them."

From Rydal Water the ancient highway

brings us to Ambleside, a happy town that thinks more of gathering its harvest from the tourists, than of any former times, which can hardly have been so profitable as the present. And here we get a glimpse of "shy Winander," with its steamers and the fleet of pleasure craft, Windermere that tones down towards its foot into the likeness of a broad and placid river. The village of Windermere is remarkable as of entirely modern growth, the creature of the railway that has its terminus there; the line that should, according to the plans of engineers and projectors, follow the trace of the ancient highway we have just traversed, over Dunmail Raise and past Thirlmere, to Keswick; a work of no engineering difficulty, that would open out the heart of the lake country to the invading thousands from the manufacturing districts of Lancashire. But this railway is barred and stopped by—what do you think? Nothing less than the shade of Wordsworth, that stands in the path and forbids it.

Windermere village has no history earlier than 1847, unless as a humble little hamlet known as Birthwaite, but now quite a flourishing place.

And now leaving the lake country behind, the fear is, that in contrast to its richness, variety, and wonderful colour, the rest of the county will seem tame and flat, but leaving Lakeland behind us we come to Kendal, Kendal of the Clothiers, Kendal that clothed Robin Hood and his merry men in their suits of appropriate green; Kendal, that once produced a queen, the Scheherazade of modern history, who tamed her Blue Beard husband, and kept her head on her shoulders—Catherine Parr, that is, whose father, Sir Thomas Parr, was of this ilk. A much-marrying pair this royal one, for Henry was Catherine's third husband, and she his sixth wife, while, perhaps, she would have gone on to tie if not to win, for her last husband, Seymour the admiral, was speedily shred off; but, alas! before then, she had expired—in childbed, poor thing!

It was a great barony, this of Kendal, originally bestowed on Ivo de Taillebois, but split up as time went on by failure of male issue—and the difficulty experienced by these great families in keeping up a succession even in the female line to their great possessions and dignities is in strange contrast to the facilities in that respect enjoyed by those who have nothing at stake in the matter. But all the land to the northward being

only doubtfully English, and Kendal as it were a border fortress, part of the great barony instituted by the Conqueror, became known in later days as the Queen's Fee; not so called, as some authorities pretend—and it is pleasant to be able to show our superior wisdom—from Catherine Parr, but from another Queen Catherine, happy in living in days when it was no longer necessary to cut off the queen's head when she ceased to please, to whom it was assigned by her husband Charles the Second. In this way connected with royalty, the barony of Kendal was revived in the days of King George, and in the form of a dukedom to grace a quasi queen, Madame Schulenberg, with whom the dignity expired, let us hope in a dignified way. Wordsworth describes the town. Surely his stamp-office was there, and he with something of the pressure of it upon him when he wrote: "A straggling borough of early charters proud"—the earliest only from Elizabeth, by the way—"And dignified by battlements and towers Of a stern castle mouldering on the brow Of a green hill." Poet Gray, too, describes it, not being under the necessity of writing poetry at the moment, as if the houses were all enjoying a country dance.

Kendal is of course Kentdale, from the little river Kent, and was once more fully Kirkby-Kentdale—one of the numerous Kirkbys in Westmoreland, that seem to show not only that there were Scandinavian settlers in plenty in the county, but that they must have been already pretty good Christians when they formed these settlements, for Kirkby is just "church-town," and nothing else. And the river Kent flows down from Kentmere, where there is an ancient square tower notable as the birth-place of Bernard Gilpin.

For these sweet odours shall preserve his fame,
So long as Kent from Kentmere takes his name.

And Bernard Gilpin, once known as the Apostle of the Borders, is a curious link between the new and old—between the England of monasteries and shaven crowns and the present order of things; for Gilpin, on one side the prototype of our Baxters, our Wesleys, and the rest, had in his childhood, on his mother's knee, listened to the preaching of a begging friar, and had given vent to his wonder that one should preach so eloquently against drunkenness who had been so drunk himself the night before. His uncle, indeed, had been slain on Bosworth field, and another ancestor was "that Richard Gilpin who slew the wilde Boore."

Gilpin's fame, however, belongs more strictly to the scene of his labours, his parsonage in Durham; and it would be difficult to recall any memory of him on the banks of Kentmere—the once Mere all reclaimed and cultivated, although its place is taken by a large reservoir at a higher level formed to supply the mills of Kendal. Having done its duty by the clothiers, the river flows tranquilly through a flat country abounding with old halls and picturesque towers—Heversham, for instance, with its old mansions by the dozen, and Beetham, with its hall, once the seat of the family of the same name, a fine castellated building now in ruins with two crumbling towers that guard the issue of the river into Morecambe Bay.

Travelling northwards from Kendal, either by rail or the now almost deserted North road, we are once more in the wild fell country. Orton lies to the right, once a market town, and the name suggests how fruitful in English surnames is this northern land. Hardly a hamlet or a village but is represented in families, both high and low, and betwixt and between, scattered all over the country; a fact that seems to indicate a considerable clearance of population from these regions, districts once rich in men but poor in rentals, and now, perhaps, just the reverse. And yet about such wild districts as Orton a good deal of the old life still remains; representatives of the sturdy Kentdale men, of whom it was said at Flodden:

There are the bows of Kentdale bold,
Who fierce will fight and never flee.

Hereabouts, perhaps, may be met the wandering potter, for in Cumbria the potter replaces the tinker—cooking pots having there been far more used than iron pans. Here too, perhaps, in some recently felled plantation may be found a tribe of itinerant clog-makers, who cut out the wooden shoes still popular in these northern districts. The shepherd, too, is here with his weather-lore and his keen sympathetic insight for the animal life about him. The shepherd surely is pretty much the same all over Europe, the healthy brown face, the twinkling eye, the tart cynic views about human affairs; but, hereabouts, with the wide range of fells about him, his figure assumes a sort of pre-historic dignity. One would like to assist at the great shepherds' gathering on St. Martin's Day, when from far and near, from Cumberland, Northumberland, Durham, York, Westmoreland, the shepherds assemble in

a kind of Ecumenical Council, when the stray sheep are all brought back and recognised according to their marks. It is quite a lore, that of sheep-marking, and has made itself a place in literature even, with its hand-books like any other science. What an assemblage of dogs too: the noble collie, the honest tyke with his "bows'nt" face, the mean and quarrelsome but useful Welsh cur, and the nondescript with his bobbed-tail recalling forest laws of old, and the faithful dog of poor Gurth!

Many, too, were the old customs, remnants of an indigenous civilisation that survived till quite recently among the dales. The Upshot, for instance, that recalls the Welsh Cymhorth, a meeting projected by some young fellows, who having provided bread-and-cheese and ale, and fixed a place of meeting, announced the time and place from a Through, or flat tombstone, in the Kirkgarth, when there would be great card-playing and dancing in the great loft of the farmhouse.

Pretty strong must have been the oaken rafters of those old farmhouses, with Meg and Hob and twenty or thirty more hands across and down the middle; and firm the rude stone walls. Just a stone shell in most cases these old farmhouses, partitioned off with huge balks of timber, always with the hallan, a wide passage, through the middle; the house place with a huge hearth and long oaken settle by the fire, where lads and lassies would sit up courting by firelight, a custom that has found its way across the Atlantic. Always the pantry must be on the north or cool side of the house, the studio of the artists in cheese and butter, while the bower or sleeping-chamber faces the warm sunshine. An open stair usually led from the bower to the loft. Everywhere a great wealth of huge wooden arks or chests often elaborately carved, with interlaced patterns; for in these solitary farms the hinds were often skilful carvers of wood, like their comrades on the northern fiords; chests full of household stores in a rude kind of plenty.

A wedding among the dalesfolk was an affair of universal interest—such a wedding as that described by a local bard, when all the country round assembled to make merry and dance to the tune of Cuddy's Wedding. With good honest purpose, too, was the gathering, for after the ceremony the bride in full array took her seat on a coppy stool with a pewter dibbler on her lap:

An' crowns an' hauf-crowns thick as hail
Are in the dibbler jinglin'
Reet fast that day.

Then after the feast the young fellows rode races on the sands, and there was leaping, wrestling, and grinning for bacon.

The wrestling still survives at fairs and feasts, but sword-play seems to have died out, although it was once the general way of deciding a quarrel or suit, the ground where the men fought being covered with matting, and the first blood drawn deciding the contest.

Near Orton are two heaps of stones, reported the graves of Robin Hood and Little John, about which a curious custom perhaps still survives. Everyone who went a nutting ought to throw a stone on Robin Hood's grave, and repeat the incantation:

Robin Hood, Robin Hood, here lie thy bones,
Load me with nuts as I load thee with stones.

Leaving the fells for the moors we come to Crosby Ravensworth, a district where old deserted halls are frequent, with many traces of earlier British settlements. From this district came the Addisons—the polish of the essayist upon a substratum of north-county shrewdness—and on the high road and rail is Shap among its moorland wastes, better known, perhaps, in coaching days than now; the remains of an abbey hereabouts with one lone melancholy tower still standing. But soon the country assumes a more gracious and fertile aspect—as a by-way takes us

Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.

And here rise the towers of Lowther Castle—an imposing pile in the best style of the once-fashionable architect Smirke. People were not so learnedly Gothic in those days, and Southey has something courtly and gracious to say about the newly-raised battlements and towers; for this Lowther Castle was a sort of hospitable Valhalla for the poets, where they met and quaffed the "blude-red wine," and were genteelly stared at by the fashionable guests from London. Among the minor poets who frequented Lord Lonsdale's hospitable board was a friend of Wordsworth's—Thomas Wilkinson, a Quaker, and of independent means, living at Yanwath, near Penrith, "a poet in a gentle unassuming way," says De Quincey, "to be added to the corps littéraire of the Lakes, and Yanwath to be put down as the advanced post of that corps in the north." Perhaps this gentle Quaker was a descendant of that Parson Wilkinson of whom we have read as losing his dinner in controversy with George Fox.

As for Yanwath, it lies near the foot of

Ullswater, and there is a little Quaker burial-ground close by, where lies the body of young Gough, who was killed in ascending Helvellyn from Patterdale early in the present century. Not that such accidents are unfrequent. Every year almost, adds to the tale of victims to the grim forces of Nature rashly encountered. But, recorded in poetry, both by Scott and Wordsworth, the fate of the young Quaker still excites sympathy, hurled from the awful curtain of rock called Striding Edge, the body lying for months where it fell, till the notice of a shepherd was attracted by the barking of a small yellowish-coloured terrier, with a glance wild and shy, making its way through some bracken-beds where lay her master's bones.

Perhaps the most affecting story of the kind is that of the man and his wife perishing in a snow-storm on their way home to their lonely cottage in Easedale, where six little children were awaiting their arrival. For some days after these children were cut off by the snow-storm from human aid, while the eldest, a girl of nine years old, cared for her hapless little family with unshaken courage and resolution, till at last the weather moderated, and the poor child was able to make her way over the hills to Grasmere, where she told her piteous tale. It hardly needs to tell of the fervid sympathy that travelled through the vale. Within half an hour all the men of the valley had assembled, and search-parties were organised. But days elapsed before the unfortunate pair were found, not far apart, near the edge of a frightful precipice. After the funeral, the struggle in the valley was to obtain one of the children to bring up. The Wordsworths took charge of one, and, indeed, through their means the whole country rang with the story, and even over-abundant help was poured in for the hapless little family.

Some day, perhaps, we shall have something more to say of the dangers of mountain walks and peak-climbing in the Lake Country.

To return to the lowlands of Westmoreland, and the valley where the Eamont and the Eden join their waters, with Appleby higher up the Eden—once an important border town, the seat of a barony equal in importance to that of Kendal. Here, in the church of St. Laurence, are the tombs of sundry Cliffords, most noticeably of Lady Ann, of whom we have heard at Skipton in

Yorkshire, and who is still further commemorated in this town by a row of almshouses that she founded, and that still bear her name. It is she of whom Horace Walpole relates that, disputing with the crown the nomination to the benefice of Appleby, she wrote to the minister of the day: "I have been bullied by an usurper, I have been neglected by a court, but I will not be dictated to by a subject. Your man shall not stand."

The Cliffords had many castles in Westmoreland—Brougham, with its massive keep, finally dismantled in the beginning of the eighteenth century; Brough under Stainmore and Pendragon on the Eden; and all these castles, shattered and dismantled by the victorious Roundheads, Lady Ann set herself zealously to restore. Her friends told her that as fast as she built the stern Lord Protector would pull down. But Cromwell was too magnanimous. "Nay, let her build as she will," he said; "she shall have no hindrance from me." But she was building up what time and altered manners had already doomed, and these castles are all in ruins now, little the better for her patching. Of these, Pendragon, perhaps, is most interesting from its connection with Celtic legends. Tradition assigns it to Uter Pendragon, who visits Queen Igerna at Tintagel in the likeness of her husband, King Gorlois, after the manner of Jove and Amphitryon, through the magic arts of Merlin. And there are vast earthworks and trenches about it, which the popular legend ascribes to an attempt to make the river wind round the castle. Witness the old rhyme:

Let Uter Pendragon do what he can,
Eden will run where Eden ran.

Then we come to Kirkby Stephen, near the sources of the Eden, surrounded by moor and mountain, with its fine early church, and its monument to Sir Thomas Wharton, who, with Lord Dacre, defeated the Scots at Salom Moss, and was created Lord Wharton. Their ancient seat, Wharton Hall, was close by, and the strange career will be recalled of the last of the line,

Wharton the scorn and wonder of our days.

Philip Wharton, that is, who at seventeen abandoned his possessions in England to join the defeated and discredited Pretender—James the Eighth, as fanatic Jacobites would call him—who created him Duke of Northumberland, a title not acknowledged

in our peerages; but who was soon disgusted with James, and made his peace with George, who in his turn made him Duke of Wharton—a great title for such a small place. But the brilliant duke rocketed off again to the Pretender, and we last hear of him as taking service with Spain, and against his own native land, at the Siege of Gibraltar. Finally he died in Spain, and was buried in some obscure convent.

Among the hills above Kirkby Stephen stands Brough with its ruined castle, built from the remains of the Roman station, most famous now for Brough Hill Fair, the great gathering of the dalesmen, who come hither from far and near; a gathering whose origin is lost in the mist of age, and perhaps goes back to the time when the fair was held under the walls of the station, and the Roman soldiers chattered with the market-women. From this point the great waste of Stainmore stretches away far into Yorkshire, with the ancient landmark of Rey Cross just on the borders of the two counties—a cross that some say was set up to mark the boundaries of two kingdoms; but of what kingdoms it is difficult to say. Perhaps this great meer or boundary-stone gives a clue to the origin of the county name. It would be the West Meer to the Northumbrians, and the land beyond, the Westmeerland. On the other hand there is plenty of moorland about to give countenance to the more obvious etymology.

Anyhow, it is a rough wild district all along the southern boundaries of the county till we come to where Kirkby Lonsdale, with its famous bridge, the gate of the north country—one of the numerous bridges ascribed to the Enemy of Mankind, built on the usual covenant, the first soul across, with the customary painful fraud on the architect and contractor. For the rest, a little town of freestone and blue slate, with a fine view up the valley towards Ingleborough; the old bridge with its three ribbed arches still stands, we hope; and there is a fine church with memorials of the original Lowthers, already mentioned in connection with Lowther Castle, a family of the long robe, that devoting itself to the cause of the Protestant succession, found for itself a pleasant succession of offices and titles. And from Kirkby Lonsdale to the mouth of the Kent again is a strip of flat country with a good deal of reclaimed bog about not very tempting to the explorer.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III.

CHAPTER XI. IN CONCLAVE.

WITH the utterance of that pathetic tribute of compassionate love, a sob broke from Ralph Stirling. But no tear dimmed his eyes.

To "act in the living present" was the desire that urged him on and gave him courage. It would not do to yield to the flood of infinite pity and yearning tenderness that filled his heart, as he began to grasp and realise the idea of what had been his father's life, his sorrow, and—his sin.

His father's death, looked upon from one standpoint, was unspeakably terrible; looked at from another, infinitely beautiful.

To repent, to confess, to make reparation—such was the threefold cord of desire that had drawn the erring soul heavenward. The hand that had seemed most cruel had been God's instrument of mercy.

Hester, believing herself driven onwards by the lust of vengeance, was but in reality fulfilling the decree of Heaven. But for her fell work, that sacred behest to "make restitution" might never have passed Geoffrey Stirling's lips, or come—a precious legacy—to the knowledge of his son Ralph.

Strange irony of fate that the message sent to one believed to be dead should reach the living, and change the whole tenor of a human life!

Nurse Prettyman watched her foster-child with sore misgivings. She saw him under a new and unfamiliar aspect. She could not rise to the level of his ideas as to Hester's handiwork, or recognise the possibility of good underlying evil, and blessing masquerading as a curse. But her shrewd mind quickly gathered the meaning of those pregnant words, "A changed and altered life."

A life stripped of wealth and all the luxury and state that accrue from wealth; a life of struggle and self-denial, of effort to expiate a sin not his own.

In her own simple way she thought these things, and a sudden sense of pitiful helplessness, an almost fear of the man who, as he stood before her now, appeared like one whom she had never known, not as her darling "Master Ralph," having come over her, hailed with joy the sound

of steps and voices in the hall and the touch of a firm hand upon the latch.

She could not have wished for anything better than that the vicar should appear at such a crisis as the present. The fact that Davey followed him assured her that he came armed with the fullest knowledge, and it was with little or no surprise that she saw the scared white face and fluttering locks of Anthony Geddes behind the other two.

The old man came in timidly, rubbing his shaking hands the one in the other, and looking at Master Ralph with large, dim, wondering eyes, that seemed to be gazing appalledly at the ruins of the house and the dead ashes of the firm as by him represented.

Had not the rout and ruin of thirteen years ago been abject enough but that now disaster tenfold as terrible must come upon the name that Anthony Geddes loved?

Could the marvellous story be true, to which he had listened from the vicar's lips with almost a feeling as though reverend lips were speaking blasphemy against the dead? And yet beneath this natural revolt against the rending to tatters of a life's belief and trust had there not been scattered memories, gathering themselves together, arraying themselves, a serried rank of witnesses, all pointing the same way, all telling the same tale?

What immeasurable pity, what tender yearning filled the heart of Anthony Geddes as he looked on Master Ralph—that bright boy who once had come and gone like fitful sunshine in the bank, smiling and nodding at the old manager, as he went upon his way with his little hand tucked safely into that of the proud and happy father!

Ah, why do such memories of far-off sunshine come to us in our darkest hours, as if to mock us with their gleaming?

"Sit down, old friend," said Ralph gently, seeing that Anthony shook like an autumn leaf shivering in the wind so that he scarce could stand; and with a low sound, half moan, half mutter, the old man obeyed. It seemed as if his old master's voice was speaking to him—so like—so like were look and tone, and exquisite grave courtesy.

As Ralph faced the vicar, the two men grasped hands, and stood a moment silent, eye to eye.

"Then thank God—for the good courage

that is in you!" said Cuthbert Deane; and was even in the utterance of these hearty words as near breaking down himself as might be.

"Thank God, indeed!" echoed Davey; "but Master Ralph hardly knows the worst yet."

"I think I do, Davey; I think I have drained the bitter cup to the dregs."

"Ay, that has he," put in Nurse Prettyman. "I've kep' nothing back, sir," she went on, addressing herself directly to Cuthbert Deane, as feeling that if her "spiritual pastors and masters" were satisfied, then need no man carp.

"You did well, and have spared Davey a painful task, Mrs. Prettyman," said the vicar, and something in his manner subtly suggested to the good woman that her part in the stirring drama in process of enactment was, for the time being, at an end.

She noiselessly withdrew, and closed the door upon that strange quartette gathered together in the room where Geoffrey Stirling had kept such agonised and weary vigils.

"She is to be trusted?" said the vicar, looking at Ralph.

The answer came in one word:

"Absolutely."

That question and answer were the first outward signs of the meaning and design—hitherto unacknowledged in words, yet plainly enough stamped upon the heart and mind of each—that actuated the four men now met in conclave. This conclave was, in fact, a conspiracy deep and perilous, not to defeat, but to compass, the ends of justice; not only so, but—difficult and delicate task—in the doing of this to shield the honour of a dead man, and to guard inviolate the sanctity of a well-loved name.

Of the four, he who was most nearly and dearly concerned, showed the greatest outward calmness. In truth, Cuthbert Deane watched Ralph with amaze, dreading the reaction that must follow such dire and sustained effort. Yet was he too wise to weaken by a word of pity or a touch of tenderness.

"Davey," said Ralph (and at the sound of his own name Davey started as though his own guilt, and not that of another, were under investigation), "tell me, where have you hidden away the oaken coffer and its contents?"

The demand was not put in the form of a question, rather asserted as a known fact.

"I—I—had it taken to the tower-room," stammered Davey.

"With the help of Mrs. Prettyman?" continued his master.

"Yes, we thought that the wisest course."

"Its contents have been destroyed?"

Davey took out his handkerchief and wiped his brow.

"Master Ralph," he said, "have I angered you in this matter? Heaven knows I have striven to act for the best. I have prayed upon my bended knees to be shown the right way. I have carried a heavy burden on my heart this three years back. I have grown old over bearing it. All I thought of was to shield you. Master Ralph, do not look at me like that."

"If Davey erred, it was from too much love," said the vicar, and his hand fell on the ill-balanced, heavy shoulder, and rested there.

At which touch and word Davey broke out crying like a child.

"God forgive me!" said Ralph with a quick despairing gesture; "sorrow and suffering are making me hard and cruel, even to those who love me best!"

"Nay, nay, Master Ralph," quavered old Anthony at this, "it's not hard you are—only stunned-like, same as one who has got a blow nigh unto death, and must have time to gather himself together. Happen it might ha' been better for Davey to have wrote and told you all the truth when you were given back to us—like him as was raised from the dead by the Lord's own hand, and given back to the kindred as mourned him; but it would ha' been a sorry kind o' greeting, and Davey, in his loving heart, thought to hide away the thing for ever. I'm an old man, Master Ralph—an old man who has grown grey in your father's service and your own, and so I make bold to speak, and say I can put myself in Davey's place, and see with Davey's eyes, and feel with Davey's heart. Ay—ay! but 'twas hard on the lad—a sorry burden to be lifted and carried with him to a far-off land."

"Where he has toiled for me," said Ralph. "Davey, can you forgive me for a moment's unjust anger? Remember I have been sorely tried to-night; hardly, as Anthony has truly said, able to look at anything fairly—am still half-stunned—reeling from a horrible shock—I crave forbearance at your hands."

"The waggoner's frock, the beard, and hat were all destroyed. I kept nothing

but the keys that lay under all. Even those I did not mean to keep; but the heavy lid of the coffer fell and closed. I could not open it again—it has no lock, no latch."

Thus ran Davey's story, and as Ralph listened, a new eagerness, a new light, lit up his face.

"I am glad the coffer has kept its secret so well," he said with a faint smile; "we will make it speak yet. Now, Anthony, your memory, I know, is as clear as when you first became manager of Stirling's bank—try if you can recall what kind of keys fitted the two outer doors?"

"I can remember them as well as though I saw them before me now," replied the old man, trembling with eagerness, and holding out his hand as though he grasped the keys, and heard them clink, as he had done many a time in those bygone days, when "the boy Davey" brought them to him after the bank was closed. "They had hook-wards, and were deep and broad. I could draw them, if my hand were a bit steadier."

"You hear?" said Ralph, turning to the vicar with a grave impressive look.

Then he turned again to Davey.

"The coffer is carved in a quaint device of roses; below, on either side, close to the feet—a griffin. Press and turn the eye of the griffin on the right; then—bring me the keys. When I was a little fellow—a curious one, too, and one who liked to see the ins and outs of all things—my dear father showed me the trick of that old coffer. The knowledge will stand me in good stead now."

After Davey had left the room silence reigned, broken only by the soft beat of old Anthony's hand upon the table.

Cuthbert Deane stood by the mantel, his eyes shaded by his hand. Ralph, his arms folded on his breast, seemed listening to Davey's footsteps as they died away in the distance, listening then for their return.

At first faint, then growing louder and more distinct, at last they came.

The door, that had been left unlatched, was pushed open, closely shut, and then——

Davey laid two large keys upon the table before which sat Anthony Geddes, and four heads bent eagerly above them.

There lay the silent yet eloquent witnesses to Geoffrey Stirling's sin.

Two keys with hook-wards, deep and wide.

Anthony raised them, weighing them in his hand.

"They are duplicates," he said; "they are lighter than the keys I used to handle, but of the same shape and fashion."

Cuthbert Deane drew a long breath. He, too, like the others, had spun his web of thought in which each mesh fitted into the whole without a flaw; and yet, he had been as one who dreams, and dreaming says to his own soul, "I do but dream, this is but the phantasy of my brain," so unreal had all things seemed to him. At the moment when Davey, pale as some troubled spirit from the silent land, came into his study, and there, with wild gesture and still wilder words, had told of the sore strait into which Ralph Stirling had drifted—nothing had seemed real to Cuthbert Deane, save the necessity of concealing from Alicia that their untimely visitor was David Robin, and of blinding her to the sore trouble which he could not stop to explain.

So with a smile and a kiss, and a suggestion that she had better go to bed as he might be kept out late, he left her; seeming to step out of the sacred peacefulness of his quiet home into a darkness fraught with wonder and distress unparalleled.

But now, a clearer light came upon him.

This thing, this marvellous, incredible thing that Davey had told him in hurried, half-whispered, often incoherent words, was—true.

To strengthen Ralph's hands, to fortify all reasonable righteous impulses on his part, was the duty now set before him.

"Let me speak plainly and promptly," said Ralph, "let me lay bare my heart and purpose to you three—my best and truest friends. I stand before you stripped of all earthly possessions, save and except the small dower that was my mother's. The rest—house, and lands, and moneys—I hold, in trust for my father, Geoffrey Stirling, to be used as you and I shall see fit, for the carrying out of his last behest—to make reparation."

The vicar's eyes grew so bright that they seemed to hold the sheen of tears. Davey, with a cry of rage and pain, clutched his hair with his hands, and his eyes were

ready to start from his head as he stared at his unhappy master. The face of Anthony Geddes was hidden on his outstretched arms; his head was bowed beneath this load of shame and sorrow; his white locks lay prone and scattered.

Truly "the evil that men do lives after them," for was not all this pain and ruin wrought by a dead hand; was not the legacy left by Geoffrey Stirling to the son he loved dearer than his own soul, in truth a terrible one?

After long debate carried on far into the night, Ralph found himself alone in his now doubly desolate home. Words of cheer, words of tenderness given in parting greeting, had not been lacking; yet was his heart heavy within him.

Throwing himself on his bed, he fell into the stupor-like sleep of abject bodily and mental exhaustion. Yet towards morning, as lighter and more healthful slumber supervened, the angel of pity touched him, and he smiled as he slept.

For he dreamed of the touch of Hilda's lips on his, and her voice seemed to murmur in his ear:

It is not—it cannot be—laid aside.
It is not a thing to forget or hide;
It clings to the heart—ah, woe is me!—
As the ivy clings to the old oak tree;

and so, for a while, in sleep forgot his sorrow.

But when morning dawned, and he gazed wistfully on the beautiful home that had never been dearer in his eyes than now, when it was no longer his own, he remembered with a bitter pang that never would that dainty love of his wander among the roses, or linger in the purple shadow of the old cedar-tree.

An hour later he was tearing wildly down the pathway that led to the White House, all thought of his own sorrow and trouble forgotten, in the overwhelming idea that terrible disaster had fallen upon the woman he loved.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LIX. JOE THOROUGHBUNG'S WEDDING.

WHILE some men die others are marrying. While the funeral dirge was pealing sadly at Tretton, the joyful marriage-bells were ringing both at Buntingford and Buston. Joe Thoroughbung, dressed all in his best, was about to carry off Molly Annesley to Rome, previous to settling down to a comfortable life of hunting and brewing in his native town. Miss Thoroughbung sent her compliments to Mrs. Annesley. Would her brother be there? She thought it probable that Mr. Prosper would not be glad to see her. She had longed, by the way, to substitute "Peter" for Mr. Prosper, but abstained. In such case she would deny herself the pleasure of "seeing Joe turned off." Then an embassy was sent to the Hall. The two younger girls went with the object of inviting Uncle Prosper,—but with a desire at their hearts that Uncle Prosper might not come. "I presume the family at Buntingford will be represented?" Uncle Prosper had asked. "Somebody will come, I suppose," said Fanny. Then Uncle Prosper had sent down a pretty jewelled ring, and said that he would remain in his room. His health hardly permitted of his being present with advantage. So it was decided that Miss Thoroughbung should come, and everyone felt that she would be the troubling spirit, if not at the ceremony—at the banquet which would be given afterwards.

Miss Thoroughbung was not the only obstacle, had the whole been known. Young Soames, the son of the attorney with whom Mr. Prosper had found it so evil a thing to have to deal, was to act as

Joe's best man. Mr. Prosper learned this probably from Matthew, but he never spoke of it to the family. It was a sad disgrace in his eyes that any Soames should have been so far mixed up with the Prosper blood. Young Algy Soames was in himself a very nice sort of young fellow, who liked a day's hunting when he could be spared out of his father's office, and whose worst fault was that he wore loud cravats. But he was an abomination to Mr. Prosper,—who had never seen him. As it was, he carried himself very mildly on this occasion.

"It's a pity we're not to have two marriages at the same time," said Mr. Crabtree, a clerical wag from the next parish. "Don't you think so, Mrs. Annesley?" Mrs. Annesley was standing close by, as was also Miss Thoroughbung, but she made no answer to the appeal. People who understood anything knew that Mrs. Annesley would not be gratified by such an allusion. But Mr. Crabtree was a man who understood nothing.

"The old birds never pair so readily as the young ones," said Miss Thoroughbung.

"Old! Who talks of being old?" said Mr. Crabtree. "My friend Prosper is quite a boy. There's a good time coming, and I hope you'll give way yet, Miss Thoroughbung."

Then they were all marshalled on their way to church. It is quite out of my power to describe the bride's dress,—or those of the bridesmaids. They were the bride's sisters, and two of his sisters. An attempt had been made to induce Florence Mountjoy to come down, but it had been unsuccessful. Things had gone so far now at Cheltenham that Mrs. Mountjoy had been driven to acknowledge that, if Florence held to her project for three years, she should be allowed to marry Harry

Annesley. But she had accompanied this permission by many absurd restrictions. Florence was not to see him, at any rate during the first year. But she was to see Mountjoy Scarborough if he came to Cheltenham. Florence declared this to be impossible, but as the Buston marriage took place just at this moment, she could not have her way in everything. Joe drove up to the church with Algy Soames, it not having been thought discreet that he should enter the parsonage on that morning, though he had been there nearly every day through the winter. "I declare here he is," said Miss Thoroughtung very loudly. "I never thought he'd have the courage at the last moment."

"I wonder how a certain gentleman would have felt when it came to his last moment," said Mr. Crabtree.

Mrs. Annesley took to weeping bitterly, which seemed to be unnecessary, as she had done nothing but congratulate herself since the match had first been made, and had rejoiced greatly that one of her numerous brood should have been "put into such a haven of rest."

"My dear Mrs. Annesley," said Mrs. Crabtree, consoling her in that she would not be far removed from her child, "you can almost see the brewery chimneys from the church tower." Those who knew the two ladies well, were aware that there was some little slur intended by the allusion to brewery chimneys. Mrs. Crabtree's girl had married the third son of Sir Reginald Rattlepate. The Rattlepates were not rich, and the third son was not inclined to earn his bread.

"Thank goodness, yes," said Mrs. Annesley through her tears. "Whenever I shall see them I shall know that there's an income coming out with the smoke."

The boys were home from school for the occasion. "Molly, there's Joe coming after you," said the elder.

"If he gives you a kiss now you needn't pretend to mind," said the other.

"My darling,—my own one, that so soon will be my own no longer," said the father, as he made his way into the vestry to put on his surplice.

"Dear papa!" It was the only word the bride said as she walked in at the church door, and prepared to make her way up the nave at the head of her little bevy. They were all very bright as they stood there before the altar, but the brightest spot among them all was Algy Soames's blue necktie. Joe for the moment was

much depressed, and thought nothing of the last run in which he had distinguished himself;—but nevertheless he held up his head well as a man and a brewer.

"Dont'ee take on so," Miss Thoroughtung said to Mrs. Annesley at the last moment. "He'll give her plenty to eat and to drink, and will never do her a morsel of harm." Joe overheard this, and wished that his aunt was back at Marmaduke Lodge.

Then the marriage was over, and they all trooped into the vestry to sign the book. "You can't get out of that now," said Mrs. Crabtree to Joe.

"I don't want. I have got the fairest girl in these parts for my wife, and as I believe the best young woman." This he said with a spirit for which Mrs. Crabtree had not given him credit, and Algy Soames heard him and admired his friend from behind his blue necktie. And one of the girls heard it, and cried tears of joy as she told her sister afterwards in the bedroom. "Oh, what a darling he is," Molly had said amidst her own sobbing. Joe stood an inch higher among them all because of that word.

Then came the breakfast, that dullest, saddest hour of all. To feed heavily about twelve in the morning is always a nuisance,—a nuisance so abominable that it should be avoided under any other circumstances than a wedding in your own family. But that wedding-breakfast, when it does come, is the worst of all feeding. The smart dresses and bare shoulders seen there by daylight, the handing people in and out among the seats, the very nature of the food, made up of chicken and sweets and flummery, the profusion of champagne, not sometimes of the very best on such an occasion;—and then the speeches! They fall generally to the lot of some middle-aged gentlemen, who seem always to have been selected for their incapacity. But there is a worse trouble yet remaining—in the unnatural repletion which the sight even of so much food produces, and the fact that your dinner for that day is destroyed utterly.

Mr. Crabtree and the two fathers made the speeches, over and beyond that which was made by Joe himself. Joe's father was not eloquent. He brewed, no doubt, good beer, without a taste in it beyond malt and hops. No man in the county brewed better beer. But he couldn't make a speech. He got up, dressed in a big white waistcoat, and a face as red as his

son's hunting-coat, and said that he hoped his boy would make a good husband. All he could say was that being a lover had not helped to make him a good brewer. Perhaps when Molly Annesley was brought nearer to Buntingford, Joe mightn't spend so much of his time in going to and fro. Perhaps Mrs. Joe might not demand so much of his attention. This was the great point he made, and it was received well by all but the bride, who whispered to Joe that if he thought that he was to be among the brewing-tubs from morning to night he'd find he was mistaken. Mr. Annesley threw a word or two of feeling into his speech, as is usual with the father of the young lady, but nobody seemed to care much for that. Mr. Crabtree was facetious with the ordinary wedding jests—as might have been expected, seeing he had been present at every wedding in the county for the last twenty years. The elderly ladies laughed good-humouredly, and Mrs. Crabtree was heard to say that the whole affair would have been very tame but that Mr. Crabtree had "carried it all off." But in truth, when Joe got up the fun of the day had commenced, for Miss Thoroughbung, though she kept her chair, was able to utter as many words as her nephew. "I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you for what you've all been saying."

"So you ought, sir, for you have heard more good of yourself than you'll ever hear again."

"Then I'm the more obliged to you. What my people have said about my being so long upon the road——"

"That's only just what you have told them at the brewery. Nobody knows where you have been."

"Molly can tell you all about that."

"I can't tell them anything," Molly said in a whisper.

"But it comes only once in a man's lifetime," continued Joe; "and I dare say if we knew all about the governor when he was of my age, which I don't remember he was as spooney as anyone."

"I only saw him once for six months before he was married," said Mrs. Thoroughbung in a funereal voice.

"He's made up for it since," said Miss Thoroughbung.

"I'm sure I'm very proud to have got such a young lady to have come and joined her lot with mine," continued Joe; "and nobody can think more about his wife's family than I do."

"And all Buston," said the aunt.

"Yes, and all Buston."

"I'm sure we're all sorry that the bride's uncle, from Buston Hall, has not been able to come here to-day. You ought to say that, Joe."

"Yes, I do say it. I'm very sorry that Mr. Prosper isn't able to be here."

"Perhaps Miss Thoroughbung can tell us something about him," said Mr. Crabtree.

"Me! I know nothing special. When I saw him last he was in good health. I did nothing to make him keep his bed. Mrs. Crabtree seems to think that I have got your uncle in my keeping, Molly. I beg to say that I'm not responsible."

It must be allowed that amidst such free conversation it was difficult for Joe to shine as an orator. But, as he had no such ambition, perhaps the interruptions only served him. But Miss Thoroughbung's witticism did throw a certain damp over the wedding-breakfast. It was perhaps to have been expected that the lady should take her revenge for the injury done to her. It was the only revenge that she did take. She had been ill-used, she thought, and yet she had not put Mr. Prosper to a shilling of expense. And there was present to her a feeling that the uncle had, at the last moment, been debarred from complying with her small requests in favour of Miss Tickle and the ponies, on behalf of the young man who was now sitting opposite to her, and that the good things coming from Buston Hall were to be made to flow in the way of the Annesleys generally rather than in her way. She did not regret them very much, and it was not in her nature to be bitter; but still all those little touches about Mr. Prosper were pleasant to her, and were, of course, unpleasant to the Annesleys. Then, it will be said, she should not have come to partake of a breakfast in Mr. Annesley's dining-room. That is a matter of taste, and perhaps Miss Thoroughbung's taste was not altogether refined.

Joe's speech came to an end, and with it his aunt's remarks. But as she left the room she said a few words to Mr. Annesley. "Don't suppose that I am angry;—not in the least; certainly not with you or Harry. I'd do him a good turn to-morrow if I could;—and so for the matter of that I would to his uncle. But you can't expect but what a woman should have her feelings and express them." Mr. Annesley, on the other hand, thought it strange that a woman in such a position should express her feelings.

Then at last came the departure. Molly was taken up into her mother's room and cried over for the last time. "I know that I'm an old fool."

"Oh, mamma; now, dearest mamma!"

"A good husband is the greatest blessing that Heaven can send a girl, and I do think that he is good and sterling."

"He is, mamma, he is. I know he is."

"And when that woman talks about brewery chimneys, I know what a comfort it is that there should be chimneys, and that they should be near. Brewery chimneys are better than a do-nothing scamp that can't earn a meal for himself or his children. And when I see Joe with his pink coat on going to the meet, I thank God that my Molly has got a lad that can work hard, and ride his own horses, and go out hunting with the best of them."

"Oh, mamma, I do like to see him then. He is handsome."

"I would not have anything altered. But,—but,—— Oh, my child, you are going away."

"As Mrs. Crabtree says, I sha'n't be far."

"No, no! But you won't be all mine. The time will come when you'll think of your girls in the same way. You haven't done a thing that I haven't seen and known and pondered over; you haven't worn a skirt but what it has been dear to me; you haven't uttered a prayer but what I have heard it as it went up to Heaven. I hope he says his prayers."

"I'm sure he does," said Molly, with confidence more or less well founded.

"Now go, and leave me here. I'm such an old stupid that I can't help crying; and if that woman was to say anything more to me about the chimneys, I should give her a bit of my mind."

Then Molly went down with her traveling-hat on, looking twice prettier than she had done during the whole of the morning ceremonies. It is, I suppose, on the bridegroom's behalf that the bride is put forth in all her best looks just as she is about to become, for the first time, exclusively his own. Molly on the present occasion was very pretty, and Joe was very proud. It was not the least of his pride that he, feeling himself to be not quite as yet removed from the "Bung" to the "Thorough," had married into a family by which his ascent might be matured.

And then, as they went, came the normal shower of rice, to be picked up in the course of the next hour by the vicarage fowls, and not by the London beggars, and

the air was darkened by a storm of old shoes. In London, white satin slippers are the fashion. But Buston and Buntingford combined could not afford enough of such missiles; and, from the hands of the boys, black shoes, and boots too, were thrown freely. "There go my best pair," said one of the boys, as the chariot was driven off, "and I don't mean to let them lie there." Then the boots were recovered and taken up to the bedroom.

Now that Molly was gone, Harry's affairs became paramount at Buston. After all, Harry was of superior importance to Molly, though those chimneys at Buntingford could probably give a better income than the acres belonging to the park. But Harry was to be the future Prosper of the county, to assume at some future time the family name; and there was undoubtedly present to them all at the parsonage a feeling, that Harry Annesley Prosper would loom in future years a bigger squire than the parish had ever known before. He had got a fellowship, which no Prosper had ever done; and he had the look and tone of a man who had lived in London, which had never belonged to the Prospers generally. And he was to bring a wife, with a good fortune, and one of whom a reputation for many charms had preceded her. And Harry, having been somewhat under a cloud for the last six months, was now emerging from it brighter than ever. Even Uncle Prosper could not do without him. That terrible Miss Thoroughbung had thrown a gloom over Buston Hall, which could only be removed, as the squire himself had felt, by the coming of the natural heir. Harry was indispensable, and was no longer felt by anyone to be a burden.

It was now the end of March. Old Mr. Scarborough was dead and buried, and Mountjoy was living at Tretton. Nothing had been heard of his coming up to London. No rushing to the card-tables had been announced. That there were to be some terribly internecine law contests between him and Augustus had been declared in many circles, but of this nothing was known at the Buston Rectory. Harry had been one day at Cheltenham, and had been allowed to spend the best part of an hour with his sweetheart; but this permission had been given on the understanding that he was not to come again, and now for a month he had abstained. Then had come his uncle's offer, that generous offer under which Harry was to bring his wife to

Buston Hall, and live there during half the year; and to receive an increased allowance for his maintenance during the other half. As he thought of his ways and means he fancied that they would be almost rich. She would have five hundred a year, and he as much; and an established home would be provided for them. Of all these good things he had written to Florence, but had not yet seen her since the offer had been made. Her answer had not been as propitious as it might be, and it was absolutely necessary that he should go down to Cheltenham and settle things. The three years had in his imagination been easily reduced to one, which was still as he thought an impossible time for waiting. By degrees it came down to six months in his imagination, and now to three, resulting in an idea that they might be easily married early in June, so as to have the whole of the summer before them for their wedding tour. "Mother," he said, "I shall be off to-morrow."

"To Cheltenham?"

"Yes, to Cheltenham. What is the good of waiting? I think a girl may be too obedient to her mother."

"It is a fine feeling which you will be glad to remember that she possessed."

"Supposing that you had declared that Molly shouldn't have married Joe Thoroughbung?"

"Molly has got a father," said Mrs. Annesley.

"Suppose she had none."

"I cannot suppose anything so horrible."

"Or if you and he had joined together to forbid Molly."

"But we didn't."

"I think a girl may carry it too far," said Harry. "Mrs. Mountjoy has committed herself to Mountjoy Scarborough, and will not go back from her word. He has again come to the fore, and out of a ruined man has appeared as the rich proprietor of Tretton. Of course the mother hangs on to him still."

"You don't think Florence will change?"

"Not in the least. I'm not a bit afraid of Mountjoy Scarborough and all his property. But I can see that she may be subjected to much annoyance from which I ought to extricate her."

"What can you do, Harry?"

"Go and tell her so. Make her understand that she should put herself into my hands at once, and that I could protect her."

"Take her away from her mother by force!" said Mrs. Annesley with horror.

"If she were once married her mother would think no more about it. I don't believe that Mrs. Mountjoy has any special dislike to me. She thinks of her own nephew, and as long as Florence is Florence Mountjoy there will be for her the chance. I know that he has no chance; and I don't think that I ought to leave her there to be bullied for some endless period of time. Think of three years;—of dooming a girl to live three years without ever seeing her lover! There is an absurdity about it which is revolting. I shall go down to-morrow and see if I cannot put a stop to it." To this the mother could make no objection, though she could express no approval of a project under which Florence was to be made to marry without her mother's consent.

HEBRIDEAN FISH, FLESH, AND FOWL.

FOREMOST among the delights of a quiet cruise along the unfrequented shores and sea-lochs, and among the isles of our own North-west, comes the never ending interest of the living creatures, which haunt these lonely and silent regions, so rarely trodden by foot of man.

There are sea-lochs which penetrate into the very heart of clustering mountains, whose dark crags overhang the waters, occasionally dropping great fragments, which shy seals discover, and appropriate as pleasant couches, whereon to lie and bask undisturbed in the sunlight. Other arms of the sea form winding fiords which have worked their way in endless ramifications in and out of the soft, yielding peat-moss of which some of the isles are almost wholly composed, and in which shallow fresh-water lochs and bays, which are almost like sea-rivers, blend in an inextricable confusion. It seems to denote some talent on the part of the fishes to remember whether they belong to the fresh-water pools or to the brine.

Even the duller and most monotonous of these shores acquire a fascination from the opportunities they afford us of becoming acquainted with birds and beasts and fishes which have here sought a safe asylum from one at least of their natural enemies—the common foe, who calls himself lord of creation. As concerns inter-tribal warfare, that, I suppose, goes on ceaselessly, in all waters and on all shores.

As regards the seal, of whom I spoke just now, he has been so ruthlessly hunted

that he is now wary indeed, and shuns all haunts of men. So you must row very silently and gently if you would steal upon him unawares, and watch him sunning himself on some isolated rock, from which he can keep a good look-out all round. If he is in an active mood, he travels over the rocks with wonderful velocity by a succession of jerks, wriggling as he moves, and displaying the most wonderful flexibility of spine. In the water he is an active and graceful swimmer, strong and swift.

Should he detect the approach of his visitor he instantly dives, and swims an almost incredible distance ere he again shows his black head above water. This talent is partly due to the singular deliberation with which he breathes. About two minutes elapse between each breath, even when he is basking on dry rocks, and of course this power serves him in good stead when diving.

Another marked peculiarity is that singular taste which induces him to swallow stones of quite a large size. This he does to such an amazing extent, that some seals which have been shot have been found to contain quite a gravel-bed. It really seems as if they took in ballast. Perhaps otherwise their thick inner coating of blubber might keep them afloat against their will.

That comfortable oily lining costs them very dear, seal-oil being so highly prized as to offer almost as great an inducement for their capture as does the silvery coat of smooth oily fur which underlies their rough grey hair, and which, when that bristly hair has been plucked out, has considerable market value, though not to be compared with that of the fur-seal to which we are indebted for our beautiful soft brown seal-skin coats.

Our British seal, the *Phoca vitulina*, is totally distinct from this denizen of the warm southern oceans, which bears the name of *Otary Falklandica*. *Otary* because it possesses an external ear, and *Falklandica* because it chiefly haunts the shores of the Falkland and South Shetland Isles. Like its British cousins it protects its silky brown fur with an outer great-coat of brownish-grey hair—very soft hair, however, and much finer than the rugged garment of the *Phoca*.

Many of our coats are made from the fur of the sea-otter (*Lutra marina*), which is a native of Behring's Straits, twice the size of the common otter; its fur is a rich black, tinted with brown.

Shy and wary as the seals of our shores have now become, we may sometimes contrive to get very near them, as we sail silently, close inshore, on some blue sea-loch, keeping as near as we dare venture to its dark rocks, fringed with golden sea-weed, and left bare by the receding waters. There we may sometimes surprise a whole family of seals, of several generations—grandparents, children, and grandchildren, perhaps including a nursing mother and her baby.

The mother seal has but one annual addition to her family (possibly, however, she may have twins). She seeks the most secluded spot she can discover, and then comes ashore to give birth to her little one, which almost immediately after its birth takes quite naturally to the water.

The young seals are of so dark a colour that at a first glance we can scarcely distinguish them from the dark dry sea-wrack on which they lie. They distinguish us, however, fast enough, and glide quickly into the cool green waves.

Strange to say, however, they can sometimes be lured back by music, for all their senses are wonderfully acute, and that of hearing seems to be unusually well developed. The sound of a bell on a passing vessel, or in some sea-board chapel, often attracts them, and they will even brave the dreaded human presence for the sake of some attractive melody.

We often tested this curious fact, and purposely sung wild choruses, or played old Scotch tunes on an accordion, just for the pleasure of watching the black shining heads rise above the water as these music-loving creatures swam in the wake of our galley.

I spoke just now of the dark colour of young seals. Strange to say they become as grey as human beings in their advancing years, and a patriarchal seal is sometimes as silvery as an old grandfather.

Such a one attracted our attention one day, lying on the dark rocks at the foot of some high cliffs. We all with one accord agreed that it must be a poor sheep, which had been browsing on the verge of the crag and had fallen over. The nearer we approached the more convinced we all were that this was the case, even the experienced eyes of our older sportsmen being deceived; so we determined to put off a boat, and rescue the patient sufferer which lay so still and helpless, only from time to time turning its head uneasily at our approach. It was not till we were within a stone's

throw that the venerable seal condescended to arise, gazed at us in calm surprise, and then with a wriggle and plunge disappeared into the water, leaving us all staring in blank amazement.

Although so wary and watchful in fleeing from the presence of man, a seal is by no means a coward. Knowing discretion to be the better part of valour, he wisely avoids an encounter when he can do so; but, if wounded and compelled to meet a foe at close quarters, a grip from his powerful jaws proves him to be by no means a defenceless victim.

I am told that in olden days seals were considered an excellent substitute for fat beef. Being carnivorous—or rather, fish-ivorous—their flesh must, however, be more akin to pork, and so would possess a pleasant savour of forbidden dainties, inasmuch as pork was to every true Celt as dire an abomination as to the Hebrew or the Mahomedan. So the Highlanders cured seal-hams, and found them excellent. Even in the present day I am told that in the Orkney Isles young seals are esteemed a great delicacy.

Whale used also to be eaten in the Western Isles. It was considered coarse food, but then it was somewhat of a rarity, as such visitors were not very common in the Hebrides. Great was the excitement in Skye, a few years ago, when a great whale, sixty feet long, swam unsuspectingly right up Loch Scavaig, and there found himself so bewildered in the labyrinth of great black rocks that he ran right ashore, and flopped about in the vain struggle to escape, lashing the sea and overturning huge stones in his despair, and all the time (so say the fishers) roaring like an enraged bull, and awakening the ghostly echoes of the dark Cuchullins. For three days and nights did the poor whale battle with his rocky prison. Then the natives assembled, and having finally despatched him, set to work in wild excitement to carry off the blubber from the valuable prize. But little of this royal fish was left for Her Majesty, but we may be sure that, had she been consulted, she would have rejoiced to know how many lowly homes were illuminated through long winter nights by the unwonted supply of oil, although so vast an amount was wasted that the troubled sea all round was smoothed and calmed for many days. But weeks elapsed ere the unfragrant memory of this horrible dissection passed away from the beautiful sea-loch.

Further north, where these mighty

monsters abound, whale-beef was formerly a recognised item in the victualling of ships. Fifty pounds of whale is recorded as an item in the provisioning of the vessel in which the Maid of Norway was sent to Britain. Porpoises were also in much repute at that time; indeed, they figured at royal banquets—for instance, at the coronation of Queen Catherine of France, wife of Henry the Fifth, where the bill of fare included porpoise garnished with minnows! Another dainty bill of fare records that swans, cranes, and sea-gulls, flavoured with spices, were eaten with bread sweetened with honey.

It is curious to note how often the food of one man is hateful to his neighbour. The Fijian—who, till within the last ten years or so, has esteemed human flesh the most excellent of meats, and whose daintiest bread is a preparation of putrid pulp, the smell of which sickens a European while yet a great way off—considers our British predilection for stale cheese to be simply disgusting. And the Japanese, while delighting in slices cut from the living carp which forms the centre-piece at his great banquets, wonders how any human being can bring himself to swallow milk!

So, in a mild degree, we find capricious preferences and prejudices, for and against divers foods, even amongst our own outlying isles, whose people have each their peculiar notions as to what fish are good for food. Some will eat skate, some dog-fish, some like limpets and razor-fish, and others prefer fishy cormorant. As a matter of course, those who reject certain meats despise those who partake of them.

On one point, however, I believe all agree—namely, in their abhorrence of eels, which they look upon as a sort of water-serpent. To this day the prejudice exists, and though large quantities of great conger-eels are caught on the Argyllshire coast and elsewhere, they are all despatched to London, with very much the same feeling as a Mahomedan servant provides an abhorred ham for the infidel dog, his master. The fishers who capture these unclean monsters, would rather starve than eat one themselves, regarding them as direct descendants of the serpent of Eden.

Moreover, although denizens of the sea, they are supposed—by men who only use their own natural eyes, and have not brought powerful microscopes to bear on the eel's fine coat of scaly armour—to be devoid of scales, a form of animal life which to the Celt was particularly abhor-

rent—a curious point for consideration, inasmuch as we know that the ancient Egyptians and the Romans, in like manner, were forbidden to sacrifice such to their gods. The Israelites too were commanded by the Levitical law, "Whatsoever hath no fins, nor scales, in the seas and in the rivers, of all that moveth in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you."

So real is this prejudice on the part of the Celt, that it led to the total rejection of turbot, as being unmistakably scaleless. So even in the last generation, not even the hungriest of the needy poor would receive these despised dainties into their houses, and until very recent years, all the turbot taken, even on the coast of Fife and Aberdeen, were thrown away, as there was no sale for them, till the Saxon came north, and found that he could get fish, fit for an alderman's feast, almost for the trouble of taking it. Strange, indeed, it is that such a prejudice as this should have led to the rejection of such an immense supply of good food. When you consider that thirty pounds is by no means an uncommon weight for a turbot, and that some are even captured of more than double this weight, and that, moreover, they are so prolific, that one turbot, the roe of which weighed five pounds nine ounces, has been found to contain no fewer than fourteen million, three hundred and eleven thousand, two hundred eggs, it is evident that it ought to form a serious item in the general food supply—as indeed it does further North, where a recent report from Skagen, off the coast of Jutland, tells of the capture of two hundred and forty thousand turbot, weighing on the average upwards of one pound each.

Our Scotch fishers have learnt wisdom now, so far as supplying the market is concerned; but the would-be purchaser must remember to ask for "Roden fluke" if he is on the east coast, as true turbot are known only by that name. Should he ask for turbot, he would be offered halibut, a very coarse fish of the same family, which occasionally attains an enormous size. One was captured at Wick a few years ago, which weighed two hundred and thirty-one pounds, and measured seven feet one inch. Another caught off the Northumbrian coast weighed two hundred and ninety-four pounds.* The name

* These, however, are pigmies compared with the halibut of America, which have been captured weighing from four hundred to six hundred pounds! One weighing six hundred pounds was caught off Portland.

of fluke is that by which flounders are commonly known, and points to the impression that flounders are young turbot. The fishers are apt to be somewhat mixed in their notions as to the changes undergone by various creatures. The development of a tadpole into a frog is less startling than some of the transformations which they attribute to their marine prey. For instance, there is a strange-looking object which we occasionally captured when drawing the nets, a most grotesquely hideous creature, covered all over with rows of hard rough lumps, and having on its under-side a lumpy growth from which it derives its popular name of lump-fish. But the fishers call it a sea-hen, and declare it to be either the offspring or the parent of the common jelly-fish, a statement so remarkable that—not being in a position to disprove it—I could only listen with polite mental reservation.

The changes which this creature is known to undergo are sufficiently remarkable. When first it emerges from its tiny egg it bears a strong resemblance to a tadpole, with large head and slim body. After a while, though still large headed and smooth skinned, it develops fins, and finally becomes the bloated creature I have described, with head and fins alike buried in fat, and its whole body covered with coarse tubercles. Its flesh is soft and oily; hence the Greenlanders, and inhabitants of similar cold, oil-loving regions, esteem it a great dainty. I do not think that any of our islanders eat this repulsive-looking creature, so it is thrown overboard to become a delicious morsel for the seals. I am told that these are wonderfully expert in flaying this rough-skinned prize, peeling it as neatly as we might do a ripe peach, and doubtless swallowing it with equal enjoyment.

Many strange creatures of the deep have we seen by rowing out in the early summer morning, to watch the fishers drawing their salmon-nets—really early, no half measures, sometimes at four a.m., which, in these northern isles, is the loveliest hour of all the day. It is an exciting moment when the nets are hauled in, with their rich prize of beautiful silvery salmon, and a multitude of lesser prisoners, all held captive by the meshes, through which we plainly discern the glittering, struggling prisoners, which spring and tumble over one another in dire dismay, as gradually the line of floating cork narrows. Clean run salmon, cod, herring, saithe, lythe, cuddies—which

are young lythe—mackerel, flounders, rock-codling, and many another, are carefully collected by the fishers, and laid aside with due honour, each described by some name, which would be startling to scientific ears.

But besides these treasured prizes, there are all manner of odd creatures, sea-urchins, and sea-hedgehogs, and the aforesaid sea-hens, young sea-serpents, and queer creatures that seem to be all head and fins—one creature is called by the fishers a sea-pig. He is armed with sharp prickles down the back, which make him very unpleasant to handle, so his captors throw him overboard at once, in company with all the other odd monsters, which, rejoicing in their liberty, dive with all speed into the depths of their crystal home, provided they can escape from the rapacious foes who always follow the drawing of the nets, and hover near, ever on the watch for the chance of a swoop; black headed gulls, kittiwakes, and graceful sea-swallows with sharp wings and forked tails, wheeling around with wild musical cries.

But too often the poor escaped captives have to carry with them a sad remembrance of their temporary imprisonment, for the fishers rarely throw them overboard without a parting blow, which sends them away, sad and sorry, with small cause for loving memories of the lords of creation. On most of the isles the poor dog-fish is an object of especial hatred, and so it generally gets an extra blow. Yet on some isles these little sharks, with the sharp teeth and rough skin like coarse sand-paper, are highly prized, and carried ashore with the other good fish.

As a matter of course, the creatures that are so contemptuously thrown away, and never brought ashore, are just those which to us are most interesting, and which we could never hope to see, except by going ourselves to the nets. Amongst these are various kinds of star-fish and of small crabs. The former is the fisher's detestation, and no wonder, for a more mischievous poacher does not exist. So soon as the lines are set for the deep sea fishing, this pretty, innocent-looking little star-fish discovers them, and assumes the bait to be a feast specially prepared for him. Very often, indeed, he gets hooked himself, and leaves his poor little body as a most useless ornament on the lines; a poor comfort, however, for the toilers, whose night's work has been wasted by his previous feast. Moreover, he destroys vast quantities of

bait by selecting the mussel-scalps as his favourite feeding-bed, devouring multitudes of young mussels.

The crabs do their share of mischief by attacking the fish on the lines or in the nets, and dining comfortably at the expense of the poor prisoners. They are dragged in, clinging to their victims, and once on board the boat, they either lie still, feigning death, or else keep their fellow-sufferers lively by running about and nipping their neighbours with their strong pinchers.

Rarely does a net come in without bringing quite a varied collection of jelly-fish (*medusæ*), but, exquisite as are these butterflies of the sea when floating joyously in their crystalline world, they lose all beauty when out of their native element, and seem to be merely transparent water-bags. And yet how lovely they are when afloat, like delicate bells of rare Venetian glass, edged with a filmy fringe of pale blue or pink-tipped feelers! It seems scarcely possible that these clear gelatinous organisms should be capable of absorbing their fellow-creatures; even tiny delicate crabs seem to be too gross food for such marine fairies, and yet the larger jelly-fish are capable of capturing and consuming fish of a very goodly size.

Very beautiful and wonderful are the transformations through which some varieties of these pretty creatures pass in the course of their short summer life. In the first stage they are little eggs, laid in the autumn by the mother jelly-fish, who knows that she is about to melt away, and mingle with the ocean foam. So she deposits thousands of tiny eggs, each covered with invisible hair-like spines, movable at will, like those of the sea-urchin. These act like oars, and enable the little living eggs to paddle their way to some safe hiding-places in the crannies of the rock, to which they moor themselves, and thus, anchored and secure from wind and storm, wait to see what next will befall them. Soon from each egg there springs a tiny stem, and from it delicate branches, and every branch is covered with minute cups, edged with little waving arms, which reach out on every side.

Then as the warm summer days approach, these flowers of the sea develop a new life—each little branch buds and blossoms, and each fairy cup proves to be a living rose, a little tiny jelly-fish, with fringe of feelers and a perfect separate existence; and then the tiny creature frees itself from the stem and floats away, like an

independent diving-bell, to begin its glad life in the waters.

I know no greater delight than on a clear calm day to row slowly along the verge of any rocky shore, whether it be a tropical coral-reef or the weed-fringed rocks of our own coasts. And nowhere in Britain are the depths of the dim water-world more beautiful than in some parts of the Hebrides. There, as you rest on your oars and peer down through the lustrous green water, you will see all manner of delicate living creatures, such as these medusæ and star-fish, floating joyously in their beautiful marine forests, where the trees and shrubs are seaweeds of every hue—great brown sea-ware of many forms to represent the forest-trees, some with thick stems and broad leaves of richest golden-brown, some smooth and leathery, some fringed and folded and plaited, and others with great fan-like branches. Mingling with these are countless varieties of delicate seaweeds like floating lace-work—crimson, gold, and bronze, lustrous metallic green, pink, lilac, or olive; and the weeds of these temperate seas are far more brilliant in hue than are those of warmer tropical waters.

If you take time to examine almost any branch of that lace-like weed, you will find it beaded with hundreds of black pearls—tiny mussels, each firmly attached to its anchorage by a silken cable. And besides these, there are scores of other wonders—living creatures nestling under every leaf, hiding in every crevice, building curious nests of sand and gelatinous matter, or drifting lazily wherever the gentle current may carry them.

Should you chance to let your boat float in very shallow water, where the smooth white sand is clearly seen through the exquisite crystalline water, you may chance to see sundry flat-fish of various kinds burrowing in the sand, and only betraying their presence by an occasional shuffling movement, as though they were ashamed of showing their ugly twisted faces. Strange to say, the fishers of our Scottish east coast have precisely the same legend as the Germans, to account for this peculiarity in the flounder, namely, that it was doomed to have a crooked face to all eternity as a punishment for having rudely mocked some other fish and made faces at it as it passed! The grotesque ugliness of countenance thus immortalised is so fully appreciated by the people that to address a person as "a dun skate" is a

sort of climax of Northern Billingsgate. The skate, however, has an independent ugliness of its own, and does not inherit it from any relationship to the crooked-faced flounder, being, in fact, a sort of flattened dog-fish, and symmetrical in its structure.

Indeed, these flat-fishes are very ugly, the whole family of them; and the more we learn concerning them, the more are we puzzled to account for the creation of this crooked generation. Why should a whole family of creatures have come into existence, which (though shaped something like a large coin) do begin life symmetrically, and for the first week of their babyhood swim vertically, like other fishes, with two sides alike, and an eye on each side of their head, and then in a weak manner tumble over on one side, as if tired of being poised on edge like a shilling? Then the under-side becomes bleached to a dead white, and the upper side assumes the colour of the sand or mud on which the fish most often rests—indeed, it is said that some varieties of these flat-fish have the power of changing their colour at discretion so as exactly to match their surroundings.

But the strangest thing of all is how the symmetrical baby-face acquires that queer twist, and the ludicrous "thrawn" eyes. It seems that so soon as the fish takes to swimming on one side in this absurd fashion, the eye on the under-side resents being kept burrowing in the sand, so it deliberately starts on its independent travels, and first works its way forward on the under-side, and then gradually travels upwards, looking about it all the time, till it finds itself opposite the other eye, on the upper side of the fish. This, at least, is the course pursued by the under-eye in most cases.

In one branch of the family, however, the wandering eye prefers closing itself for a while, and taking a short cut straight through the head, reappearing at the opposite side, thence to take a fresh survey of the world. As its original mask and socket remain for a while apparently unchanged, the fish appear at this stage to be possessed of three eyes.

Some of the Hebridean Isles are so linked together, that the shallow straits which separate them recede at low tide, leaving the isles connected by a broad belt of firm sand, only interspersed with rocks and pools. Every tide strews these sands with a fresh and inexhaustible store of all manner of shell-fish, which are eagerly

collected by the people, who go out with little rough ponies carrying large baskets, in which to store the daily harvest of the sea—cockles and mussels, periwinkles and limpets, razor-fish and clams, and many other marine contributions.

The abundance of cockles and periwinkles thus obtained is almost inconceivable. The Glasgow steamers carry away from twenty to thirty tons of periwinkles only, every week, and forward them to London, to replenish the stalls of the old women at the street-corners. Thither are also carried oysters from Scalpa and Loch Snizort, while the wild coasts of Harris yield an immense array of lobsters, all of which are despatched alive, with their claws tied up to prevent their fighting by the way. They are packed together in one compact black and blue mass of twisting, struggling life, and are thus transported to the boiling-houses near Billingsgate, where they share the sad fate of a multitude of their Norwegian kindred. Norway sometimes furnishes twenty thousand lobsters in one night, while the Western Isles yield an average of fifteen thousand per week, and occasionally twice that number.

So I trust that all Londoners, while enjoying their good lobster salads, will remember that they were very likely furnished by the poor half-starved Hebrideans, on whose behalf the Lord Mayor of London is making such needful appeal to the charity of their Southern brethren—a charity on which thousands of their frugal, industrious countrymen must depend wholly until the next harvest is garnered (always supposing it ripens!).

These lobster-fisheries are, however, more profitable to the people now than they were in the last century, when about seventy thousand were annually sent from the coast of Montrose to London, and there sold at prices varying from threehalfpence to twopence-halfpenny!

Among the stores of shell-fish to be gathered from those white sands, are multitudes of solen, the inhabitant of the long brown razor-shell that strews our shores. Though so leathery as to prove a most unpalatable morsel to ordinary human beings, he is greatly prized by the fishers, as bait. But the inexperienced eye seeks him in vain, for he is safely hidden beneath the sands, and soon as he hears a step approaching, he digs a deeper hiding-place, and burrows lower and lower. But, when undisturbed, he occasionally spouts a tiny fountain right into the air, and thus

betrays his presence to the watchful bait-gatherer, who, from this habit, calls his hidden treasure the spout-fish. With a barbed iron rod he strikes deep into the moist sand, and generally succeeds in drawing out his victim. Should he fail to do so he need scarcely try again, as the creature rapidly burrows beyond reach of his foe. Should bait be scarce, however, he occasionally sprinkles salt on the hole and waits patiently and immovably till the solen risen to the surface—whether attracted or annoyed by the salt, I cannot say, but the result is the same, in that he returns to meet his doom.

Strange things from far distant shores are sometimes brought by the waves to these white sands, and, moreover, strangely divers things, that speak of currents from very opposite quarters of the globe. Sometimes large fragments of ice drift ashore, having floated down from chilly northern latitudes. And once a great walrus drifted ashore, having probably sailed along unsuspectingly on some detached fragment of his iceberg.

More often, however, the treasures left by the tide tell rather of having been floated thither by the warm currents of the Gulf Stream. Seeds of tropical plants, such as drop into the rivers as they flow through the forests, and so are carried out to sea; foreign shells; occasionally a live tortoise, or a bit of bamboo; oftenest, and most precious of all, good logs of timber washed down by some sudden flood in far forests, which carried away these fruits of the labourers' toil, and brought them as priceless boons to the inhabitants of these treeless isles, where the most precious possessions of the householder are the rafters of his hut—rafters probably made of drift-wood carefully collected and stored year by year. Precious, too, is every little stick and plank, all which are treasured with a view to the making of rude furniture for the humble, but dearly-loved home. Often these highly-prized pieces of timber have had rough histories, and could tell of pitiful wrecks when they formed parts of some brave vessel. Once a splendid timber floated ashore, and was recognised as the mainmast of the *Tilbury*, a man-of-war which had been burnt off Jamaica.

I noticed just now the odd coincidence between the Celtic abhorrence of scaleless fish and their prohibition under the old Levitical law. Curiously enough, without apparently being due to any connection of race or tradition, the same antipathy exists

towards the prohibited flesh of swine, and also towards hares. Of course all these peculiarities are now greatly modified, but to the present day Scottish housekeepers can tell us that their servants occasionally object to eat of these forbidden meats. To whatever cause the prejudice may be due, the same feeling exists in a stronger degree amongst the Laplanders, between whom and the little Picts many remarkable points of resemblance may be traced.

Curiously enough of all the birds prohibited by the Levitical law as unclean, the only one ever eaten is the cormorant, which certainly is one of the least tempting of fowls. It is such a satanic-looking bird, that the very look of it always suggests Milton's legend of its having been the first creature whose form was assumed by the Arch-Fiend, when, perched on the Tree of Life, he overlooked with envious eye the fair garden of Eden, plotting how to work mischief for the blissful pair.

The fishy taste of this repulsive-looking bird is considerably diminished by burying it in sand for four-and-twenty hours, and then skinning it; after which its flesh is said to make tolerable soup, in flavour happily combining fish and fowl, the former predominating.

There is something very weird about these solemn black birds (scarts, as they are called), which haunt the dark caves along the rocky coast. In the innermost recesses they heap up a pile of dry seaweed, selecting, with unerring instinct, a spot where the highest spring-tide cannot touch them. There they lay their eggs, and sit guarding their nests, or else stand solemn and immovable on the rock ledges, never stirring till we are well inside their cave, when a sudden flap of dusky wings startles us, and they dart past us with piercing cries. Well does the seaman recognise the voice of these birds of ill-omen, whose shrill notes invariably herald the coming storm.

It is very pretty, however, to watch them fishing, as they pounce on their silvery prey and gluttonously struggle to swallow it alive, though, perhaps, twice too big for comfort, and, moreover, wriggling piteously all the time. In olden days, some of our ancestors imported fishing cormorants from France and from Holland, and enjoyed their sport as fully as do the Chinese cormorant-fishers of the present day, fastening a leathern strap round the lower part of the throat, to prevent the birds from actually

swallowing their prey, and training them to return to their masters and disgorge their spoils.

Wonderful is the amount and variety of bird-life to be seen on some of the outlying rocky islets, where sea-birds of every sort and kind congregate in countless multitude. Thousands of puffins burrow in the turf like rabbits, while on every rocky ledge sit closely packed rows of sea-gulls, guillemots, and kittiwakes, black-headed gulls, stormy petrels, eiderdown ducks; in short all manner of wild-eyed beautiful birds guarding their precious blue or green eggs, which lie in millions on the bare rocks or half-hidden among the grass and rushes, while feathery clouds float in mid-air, hovering near their mates, and appearing in the distance almost like a shower of drifting snow-flakes gleaming in the sunlight.

For all lovers of such beautiful wild bird-life I can conceive no greater enjoyment than a yachting cruise in the Hebrides in the early springtime.

"FROM CANNES."

WHENCE do the lovely strangers come
To dazzle in the northern home?
O'er leagues of far fair foreign lands
And tossing waves and rocky strands;
Gathered where sister blossoms shine,
And roses blend with jessamine,
And lemon groves perfume the breeze—
The brilliant red anemones!

Without, the clouds stoop grey and low,
Where, over drifts of sullied snow,
The north wind sweeps on bitter wing
Where violets crouch shuddering;
And the pale primrose scarce dare peep,
Though wearied of her winter sleep.
What should they do in scenes like these,
The glorious red anemones?

Within, by warmth and tendance wooed,
To their sweet fearless charm renewed,
Like scarlet flames the leaves uncloze,
And from our spring of winds and snows,
Their magic bears the fancy back
O'er memory's fair unbroken track,
To sunny plains and whispering seas,
And wealth of red anemones.

Where in the glowing southern light,
The tideless waves lie blue and bright,
And the warm winds all scented sweep,
And in the shade the fountains leap,
And the grey-green of olives shows,
And like wrought gold, the orange glows,
While from dim mountains steals the breeze
That rustles the anemones.

Oh, dream of holiday and rest,
When life, by love and calm caressed,
'Mid beauty, charm, and novelty
Laughed through a golden mouth for me!
Though it, and all it gave is o'er,
I live its happiness once more,
Drain memory's nectar to its lees,
And—thank my red anemones.

MONSIEUR LE PASTEUR.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

SHE would marry him. She had come to him of her own accord—Heaven-sent, doubtless. And she loved him. He had not dared to believe that at first—only Divine pity and tenderness could have inspired her—but, as the days passed, circumstances brought conviction, and the doubts and fears melted into rapture.

Unless she loved him could she have been so joyous in his presence, so tenderly concerned for him, so sweetly careful lest he should be sad or weary, so proud of him in his greatest hours, so sympathetic when he fell below them?

They were to go to England for a part of their honeymoon, that he might learn to know all her friends; and then they would return to the familiar but glorified life among the hills.

His happiness exhilarated him sometimes, at other times it oppressed him like a burden. What was he that so much good should befall him; while other men were dying for a gleam of sunshine, starving for a crumb of joy? He had loved humanity always because it suffered; he would love it better now, since he had escaped from the common lot.

The world seemed transfigured, as he stood on the path, which wound from the valley up through the woods. Rays of light, like blades of silver, pierced the soft grey-ness of the rolling mists, and the drops of moisture gemming every leaf and twig, sparkled as though a shower of diamonds had fallen. How fair was Nature; how good God was; how devoted to holy works would he make all his future, as a thank-offering!

She loved him—would love him more. She had said so.

His mind was so full of her, that her voice, breaking in on his reverie, did not startle him. He put aside the boughs hanging over the fallen tree on which he had seated himself, that he might see her as she came along towards him. Having done so, he could no more have dropped the verdant screen that would have hidden her from his gaze, than if he had been turned to stone. She was not with her mother, as he had thought. A man accompanied her, a man whom he recognised at a glance, though he had never heard him described.

Statelier than a Celt, fairer than a Swiss, with bold blue eyes and blonde hair, and a

military swing in his gait, and beauty that even the sullen, reproachful anger in his face could not mar—De la Roche knew he was looking on Frank Dalby.

The girl's face was pale and tear-stained, her eyes were bent fixedly on the ground, her hands clasped before her in an attitude of resignation.

"You have not the slightest right to blame me," she was saying, "as little as you had to seek me out, that you may torture me now, when it is too late."

"And who made it too late?" he asked sadly. "Who ran away and hid herself, and made explanation and atonement impossible?"

"Did you not tell me to forget you?"

"I did, but it seemed the only thing to do then."

"As it is the only thing to do now," she said quickly.

"Oh no, for I am free."

"But I am bound."

"Only bound by your own word. I was bound by a lawful fetter."

"And what a fetter!" she cried, her eyes flashing, her chest rising and falling hurriedly; "a fetter that held you to a dancing woman, a woman whose name you dared not mention at your home! And after such a marriage tie as that, you come to me with falsehoods about your love, and win my stupid heart, to break it and disgrace me, you being married all the time."

"Did I know then that I was married? Is my oath not enough? Are the facts not proof enough that I had thought her dead? How could I know that she was too evil even to burn, when the theatre she was dancing in was left a shell? How did I know that she would bide her time to come back and be avenged, with wicked cunning, when I might have been happy? And you reproach me that I had not told you about her. You think that, false in one thing, I must be false in all. Was it a fitting story to bring to a pure woman, the story of that old sorrow and shame? Was the grief of my youth likely to crown my manhood in your eyes? If I did wrong, have I not suffered enough? And as to her, had I been older and worse, I should not have married her; in which case, in yours and all other eyes, I should have seemed blameless."

There was a hard, sneering emphasis in his tone which hurt the girl.

"Oh no, Frank, don't think us worse Pharisees than we were, and forgive me if I have seemed to doubt you. You see

your coming was such a sudden revival of the buried pain, that I hurt you more than I meant, perhaps, in self-defence. We have both suffered, and whichever of us erred has atoned, and now we may part friends."

"Then you mean us to part?"

"What can I do? There is no other way."

"Could you not tell this man the truth, and let him free you? I suppose he is honest enough to do that?"

"I shall never ask him." She was motionless now, her face bravely uplifted, though her tears fell fast. "He loves me far better than ever you loved me, Frank. I know that, though I am sure I don't know why he should."

"But you love me, and that is where I have the better of him."

There was an ugly frown on Captain Dalby's brow. It is not every man who can play the last card of the game he has lost with grace.

"Perhaps I do; but that is my shame and sorrow, and it will not be always so, I trust, and know."

"And you will have nothing to say to me now?"

"No!"

"Then I need not detain you any longer. I am sorry I intruded on you. Farewell."

"Farewell." She stood looking after him till he was out of sight, her head held high, her lips pressed together. Then she flung out her arms with a cry: "I do love him, I do love him! How can I bear it?"

A momentary oblivion seemed to fall on the minister; when it passed he was alone, with his despair.

It was all over, the short glorious dream in which he had believed himself beloved; the brief frenzy that had lifted him to the happiness of heaven. It was all over, and he was alone with the chill, and the darkening night, and his agony.

The other man had returned, the man who had wealth, and rank, and beauty, all the things that women love, and her heart had gone back to him, if, indeed, it had ever been out of his keeping.

Yet how brave she had been, poor soul, in trying to keep her faith; how firmly and gently she had spoken! The thought came to him like a gleam of comfort; at least she had wished to be true.

He could not think it out yet, the change was too new and appalling. He had sunk from his seat on the tree-trunk down to the earth, where he lay prone, in

the attitude of all sufferers, his arms folded above the fallen leaves, and his face hidden.

He was very miserable—did God know how miserable, and had he been elected to suffer this always? If so, did such a lot fall to many men? Had many such a cup offered to them in mockery, and then withdrawn, leaving them to die of thirst? Did the ark of refuge often fail men so; did the promised land often sink into deep waters, just as weary feet touched its shore? If sorrow like his were a common destiny, then he could accept it more easily; he was not a coward.

He thought it all over, as he lay prostrate, with the chills of the soil numbing him, and the mists enveloping him—how he had seen her first by the little church gate; how she had offered him her friendship, and afterwards her love; how he had been passive in it all, or seemed to have been.

He had been happy enough before she came—happy in resigned unexpectancy; but she had come, and that was all over. How was he to return to things as they had been? How would he bear the burden of all the heavy, coming years? Why, he was not thirty yet, and his life might stretch out to the allotted threescore years and ten. If so, how could he bear it—forty chill summers, forty cruel winters, forty years full of days and weeks made up, each one, of hours of pain? How could he bear it?

He rose tiredly from the earth, numbed and chilled, wet through with the dew and mists, and stumbled blindly upwards. His hat had fallen off, and lay among the dead leaves, but he did not miss it. A faint wind had risen, and a pale moon looked down on him mistily through moist scudding clouds. Along the line of the path which he followed towards the château a few houses stood, their wide-open doors permitting broad bands of light to fall across his path, and peals of rustic laughter to greet his ears. How happy the people seemed! He was almost glad now that they had never learned to think or feel as he had once wished them to do. If they had learned, doubtless they would have been less happy.

Above him the castle towered black against the sky, with yellow gleams where the casements were. He crossed the courtyard twice before he had strength to enter by the little side-door, which was left every day ajar for him. For him! What a mockery that seemed now!

He stood outside for a moment, and looked in. There was the old hall, his favourite part of all the house, and there were the pictures he and she had hung together, and the old armour they had spent a whole day polishing, and the organ which had sighed to his love and rapture a score of times. And now he was looking his last on them.

He could not bear the sight, lest it should unnerve him. He lifted the latch softly, and went in.

She was in her favourite attitude by the log-fire, and she started and half-rose as he entered. She seemed relieved at first that it was he, before she noticed his stained dress, his haggard face, and the weary trouble in his eyes.

"What is the matter? Where have you been?" she asked hurriedly with a tone of affright.

He drew back and put away the hands she extended.

"I have been fighting a battle and gaining a victory," he said.

"What battle—what victory?"

"A battle between my better nature and my worse. The better—I believe it is the better—has won."

"I do not understand you."

He came over to the hearth, and stood there in a weary drooping attitude, with a faint animal sense of comfort in the warmth.

"You know I had chosen once a hard life—almost ascetic, almost monastic—for myself. Such must fall to some men. I thought, 'Why not to me as well as to another?' and I came here, leaving temptations behind."

She inclined her head. She could not answer him.

"But temptation followed me in a guise most fair, most sweet, and I yielded to it."

He turned away, that he might not see even her shadow as she stood drooping before him, and then went on more steadily:

"But happiness was not for me. It weakened me; it stood between me and duty; and knowing that, I have come to give it up."

"Oh, Henri!"

A wave of uncomprehended feeling broke over her, a consciousness of something like dismay. Was it possible that he had known of Frank's return, and was this his generous way of setting her free? But that could not be. Frank had come and gone so suddenly.

"You will not try to hinder me—you will not make duty hard by telling me

you will be sorry?" He turned to her imploringly as he spoke. "What I am doing is surely best for me. It will be best for you too—at least I shall strive and pray that it may be."

She came up and put her clasped hands over his shoulder, and looked at him with streaming eyes.

"Dear brother, if you will have it so," she said brokenly; "whatever seems best to you will always be best in my eyes. I would have tried to make you happy if you had let me, but since you will have it otherwise I consent."

He shivered as she fell away from him. All was over.

"We shall ride up to the auberge, leave our mules there, and then walk up to the parsonage, Frank."

"Very well, darling."

"Don't you think it was better we did not tell him we were coming, or any of our plans about him?"

"Of course it was."

Frank Dalby was not in the habit of pondering deeply on his wife's questions. Women's trains of thought were never worth following, at least so the gallant captain thought, and a placid assent was all any woman, even the dearest in the world, either desired or expected.

"He will be surprised, won't he, Frank, to know that I have never forgotten him for a day since we parted?"

"I should think so, indeed, and uncommonly pleased, too."

"And don't you think he is likely to consent to my plan, to come to England, and get ordained into the Anglican Church—you know he can be as monastic there as ever he likes?"

"Of course he'll consent, and you can have him to play the organ at all your tea-drinkings, and the women can lionise him ever so."

"Frank, you must not speak so, I don't like it," Connie said gravely. "If ever I knew a saint and a man of genius, it was Henri de la Roche."

"A saint surely, since he considered you the world, the flesh, and the devil, and renounced you as such."

The young wife's lip quivered a little.

"I have a suspicion sometimes, in spite of myself, that he had some inspiration about you, and so gave me up."

"If that be so I'm very grateful to him."

Frank stopped his wife's words, that he might kiss her.

"That is the little church there. How bleak and bare it looks, with all the humble turf-covered graves around it! Oh, we must take him away from it, we must give him a better field of labour elsewhere!"

"Of course we must."

"I was standing just there, Frank, by the gate, when he came down first to meet us."

"Do you know, Connie, if you talk any more about him I shall begin to grow jealous, and to think you regret him."

"But I don't, Frank; only it was another sort of life here, and coming back to it again affects me—you can't understand how."

"I can understand perfectly, if you keep crying and making your eyes red over it."

Connie wiped two tears away furtively, and went on in silence. A little higher was the parsonage-house, with its pointed roof, and bleak little court, and wooden balconies. How still it looked, how lonely, beneath the flying clouds, and within sound of the sighing of the pines! Oh, decidedly he must be removed from here, her brother, as she had called him, and as he had chosen to be.

She went up to the door eagerly: the door that had still the natural tints of the wood, and devices carved over its face by the hand of some one who had loved him. Through the open window she could see into his study, fireless to-day, and with the faint light gleaming on the lettered bindings of his favourite books.

She knocked timidly, waited, and then knocked again.

"They are deaf or dead," the captain said impatiently, repeating the summons vigorously; and then there was a shuffling step in the passage, the step of the aged housekeeper, and the door opened reluctantly.

"We have come to see M. de la Roche; is he engaged?"

The old woman looked at her, looked her all over slowly, from her pretty boots to her flushed eager face, but did not answer.

"Will you tell him I am here; say Mrs. Dalby—no, say Connie has come to speak with him."

The old woman's face changed, a look of loss and trouble stealing over it.

"Madame has not heard then." Her voice quivered, her head shook a little with the palsy of old age. "Madame comes too late. M. le Pasteur was buried a week ago."

SOME CITY SCHOOLS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

I AM an old City of London schoolboy, and was up in London lately, assisting (in the French sense) at the opening, by the Prince of Wales, of the new building on the Thames Embankment. Why it was not built at the Temple Gardens end of the strip of Embankment is a mystery only solvable by that unlucky genius who presides over the placing of our public buildings in general. Of course it cannot be that the Corporation, so abounding in wealth, and just now, too, about to be tried for its life, could have dwarfed their own school for the sake of getting a few pounds more rent by-and-by for the more "eligible" site.

However, the building is a very good one, and as thorough a contrast to the old school in Honey Lane Market as the breezy riverside is to that little well, sunk down through the plateau of tall houses, round which always clings that indescribable odour which is made up of the butter-factor's smells at one corner, the fish and poultry man's at the other, the steams from the kitchen of "his lordship's larder," and the sicklier scent that comes up out of the warehouse cellars. This last, we schoolboys used always to affirm, had a strong dash of "organic" in it, for we well knew that within the precincts of the market had been two little churches with their graveyards, which latter had, no doubt, often been filled to overflowing when black death or a sweating sickness paid the City a visit.

I love my school-days. I value some of the friendships I then made, more even than I do those college friendships which men are so wont to rave about. I am thankful for the pattern of steady conscientious work set by the masters. How differently one thinks of this when one is no longer in the battle, for battle it is à outrance, between some of us and that heroic man, the mathematical master, who, not content with turning out more single-figure wranglers than any other master of his day, was determined also to initiate the common herd of us into his mysteries. Hard work he had with a few—stubborn Celts were two of us, *têtes carrées* (as the French say of the Bretons), one myself, at your service, another a Welsh boy, who was my great chum. I remember we were ostracised all the while the class was doing geometrical conics. I led the rebellion, asserting that algebra was the proper language for

conic sections, that it was as great waste of energy to use the old method as it would be to employ battering-rams and catapults in war. We wouldn't learn; and when "impositions" were found unavailing, we were banished from the class to another part of the big room, and the others were warned to have no dealings with such hardened offenders. I fear the warning was of little avail. With telegraphic signs and furtive missiles we managed to occupy a good deal of the class-time, and I flatter myself they were a great deal longer in getting through their work than they would have been had we been away on sick-leave. By-and-by, they began the calculus, and I, who had read a little of it by myself, and who found the enforced idleness of the mathematical hours grow wearying, humbly petitioned to be allowed to join, the rather as my Welsh comrade had got a berth in China, and was going to leave school. With rare magnanimity the master, whom I had so worried, took me back unconditionally, and before long, having beaten boys who had been far ahead of me in trigonometry, I became in my own eyes a great mathematician, and loudly insisted that the calculus was the real test of ability in that direction, just as I have sometimes contended that those theologians who talk so glibly about infinite and eternal ought to be put through a course of higher mathematics, and taught about asymptotes, and infinite series, and the various values of "nothing by nothing."

My French master, Delille, to whom I owe it that I kept alive an hereditary liking for his native tongue, ought to be remembered by many who are now common councilmen, or at any rate thriving citizens. The number of evening classes he had at various institutions was marvellous. To us it seemed as if he was always either holding a class or correcting proofs, except at those delightful evenings at home to which we elder boys were at rare intervals invited, and at which, after many had sung and much suggestive talk had gone on, the host would be persuaded to sit down to the piano and give us:

Ah, qu'il est beau, qu'il est beau, qu'il est beau,
Le post-ill-on, de Long-ju-u-u-u-meau.

In the lower forms I don't think the fellows learnt much from Delille; indeed, I am sure they didn't. But for us, his Hellénistes, as he called us (he was master also at the Bluecoat School, and thought the "Grecians" models of what upper-

form boys ought to be), he did far more than if he had taught us more regularly. He inspired nearly all of us with an enthusiasm for French. We took in the *Courrier de l'Europe*; how we used to sit up and read it stealthily, so that it might go its rounds quickly enough for one number to be done with before the other came out! Looking back, I feel a sense of vague wonder to think that I read the *Mystères de Paris* and *Bug Jargal* and whatever else the edifying feuilleton provided. How did I find time for it, and to do also a great many more "parties" than fall to the lot of most boys, for City people had not then quite given up living in the City, and as I boarded at the school I was in a good central position? I also got out to the theatre pretty often. But amid all the fun we never found our French lessons dull, for if we felt our work was shaky we would ask a dexterous question about the French Revolution and its causes, and then would come the story of Louis the Fourteenth looking out at a window of his new palace, and saying "an avenue would be an improvement down there," whereupon a dozen courtiers sent off to their estates, and, thanks to the *corvée*, got a lot of big trees dug up, carted to Versailles, and planted before the grand monarch went round to the same window next day. I owe a great deal to Delille; he taught me the use of my voice—he was recitation-master and prompter at our theatrical scenes; and what a delight it was to be allowed to go now and then and see him act in something out of *The Bourgeois Gentilhomme*; or, the *Plaideurs*, at one of his young men's classes.

Our masters, he among them, had the enthusiasm of their profession; they didn't look on collecting blue china or rare Bartolozzis as the end of life, and the making money by school-keeping merely as a means to that end. They hadn't even time to write about school-mastering, so busy were they in the work itself. I remember how our head-master—I revere his memory too much to talk lightly about him—used to sit late into the night over heaps of school-papers. His talk was always of boys—what some had done, what others were likely to do—and when years after I used to go and dine with him, he was always talking of boys of whom, of course, I knew little or nothing.

But it wasn't quite a healthy life, especially for a boarder. I remember how

I hated the wood-pavement then newly put down in Cheapside, because in the hot Julys, when we were panting for green fields and the great exam. of the year was coming on, the dust used to rise, palpable to taste and smell, higher than the first-floor windows, churned up by the perpetual whirl of carriages. No wonder a boy living there without a bit of playground, with no games but what we got up for ourselves—boxing till we were dustier than millers, or single-stick—should have worked by fits and starts, chiefly “for exams.,” and should have fallen wholly idle when at Oxford the pressure of frequent examinations was taken off. In those great heats, the only thing was to get out on the leads at night, and by moonlight or lantern, read Scott or Fenimore Cooper. I read Moore’s *Lallah Rookh* out there; it was a grand illustrated edition—I hope it didn’t get hurt by the “blacks”—lent me by a girl, whom I recollect I worshipped in those days. She was some four years my senior, and one day took to showing me her library; and we knelt side by side in the drawing-room, looking at the engravings, and to this day I can remember the thrill as my hand touched hers. Kiss her? I was as fond of kissing as a boy could be; but her—she was too much of a goddess in my eyes for me to dream of such a thing. No, on the whole it was not a healthy life, and yet I’m pretty wiry; and the building was not calculated to call out architectural talent or to cultivate taste. A more barbarous sample of Carpenter’s Gothic it would be hard to find. The new building on the Embankment is a thing to be proud of; one would like to be a boy again, if only to look up at that grand roof of the great hall, which shows that Italian—I suppose that is the style—can accommodate itself to open-work timbered roofs every whit as well as Gothic.

Poor Delille, on whose death I, then a staid man of nearly thirty, actually wrote a copy of French Alexandrines, what a contrast he was to our German master, Dr. Bialloblotzky. He, poor fellow, was at loggerheads with the committee, and every now and then would take a wild dislike to some boy whom he would accuse of being “von shpy,” employed to report on his teaching. He did not do us as much good as his colleague did; for, as we could not rub along in German as we managed to do in French, he talked to us in English, and was just as easily thrown off the groove of lesson exercises by a question about the

Talmud, or about early Teutonic myths, as the other was by a discussion on French politics. His English was very broken. I remember the length of the “divine primitive cow who out of the salt rock forth licked became was,” and who was the ancestress of all the Germans. I remember, too, the story of Abel shooting Cain, and what followed the unlucky accident.

How suggestive it all was! There are hundreds of schools where a boy may go on with the dull routine, and never have anything like that to lift him out of it, to make him think of what is outside his little life of from day to day. What a grand day it was for our mathematical master when Dr. Whewell, the master of Trinity, came to see him, and drew on the board a thing that looked like a cross between a quintain and a village sign, and told our head mathematician (who is an archdeacon now, and is said in clerical circles “to carry the Church Congress in his pocket”) to calculate the pressure on the point of support. We scoffers, to whom Whewell’s broad dialect was an offence, said his father must have been innkeeper as well as blacksmith; but, nevertheless, we felt proud that such a man—whom Prince Albert had delighted to honour, and whose wife was said to be so dignified, that if an undergraduate put his cap on a chair she would take it off and throw it out into the college ground—should be a friend of our master and an examiner obligato of our class-fellow. I was the school poet. I wish I had never let them know I had that fatal facility in stringing rhymes. They kept me at it, and (though after I left school I had the sense to wholly give it up) the trick got into the blood, and shows itself in a son who will write Morris and water instead of doing his life’s business.

How well I remember the unveiling of that statue of John Carpenter, which (dowdy inartistic thing though it is) I was glad to see on the staircase of the new school. I had to write a poem on the occasion; and we got three days’ holiday; and, as church architecture, and archæology were just then my craze, I and a fellow sixth-form boy, now the staid rector of a big parish, set off to walk to St. Alban’s. I don’t remember much of the road, except South and North Mimms, of which the names struck us, and historic Barnet, where we talked Shakespeare, but did not tarry to see church or battle-field, lest we should be too late for the abbey. We got in pretty early in the afternoon—the last ten miles

seemed much shorter than the first; and settling ourselves at The Fleur-de-Lys (everybody would call it Flower dellice), we signalled our feat by ordering a sumptuous dinner, and then rushed off to see the long, long nave, and the biggest brass in England, and the quaint bits about the transept where the school was, and the tomb of Sir John Mandeville, and the other glories of St. Alban's. He was a kindly old fellow, that schoolmaster-clerk; and he sympathised with our enthusiasm and showed us everything. We asked him to dinner, but he had to go home to his missus; however, he'd look in after, and smoke a pipe with us. If anything could have taken away my appetite it would have been that proposal of his, for I was just then passing through my smoking apprenticeship with such disastrous result that I meditated cancelling the indentures.

Of course, I didn't dream of saying "No; have a cup of coffee instead;" and when he was smoking we both felt bound to smoke too, and he talked, and sipped, and smoked, and told us about Sepwell Nunnery whose prioress had written a work on hawking and fishing, which was one of the earliest ever printed; and about St. Philip's, the old church in the town with a curious bas-relief of the Resurrection over the door, and Lord Bacon in his chair carved inside; and about the never-finished Verulam House in the wood; and the fields, low-lying under the public highway which had been tilled since Roman days. We were delighted; but delight could not save us. I felt it must come, and noting that my chum, too, was looking like Shakespeare's "native hue of resolution" on which "the pale cast of thought" had produced an unwholesome effect, I rose, and by a desperate effort mastering my emotion, "We must see Sepwell before it gets dark. You'll order yourself some more beer and stay till we come back?" I cried; and off we ran, glad to find cool air and solitude.

Next day we had more abbey, and did the other sights, including the unfinished house, very like, I thought, the Treshams' house near Lilford. Then came one of the most delightful rambles I ever had; for schoolboys so seldom get a walk in late spring or early summer, the most enjoyable of all times in the country. We forgot all about archæology, and steered by compass right across the Verulam Woods, glorious, I remember, with wild cherry, and

then on through by-ways and pleasant lanes, putting up at last at some little inn (probably a poachers' haunt) not in any village—indeed I wholly forget where. That woodland walk lost us Hatfield, which I had meant to see; and two of our days were gone, so there was nothing for it but to start very early to get home the shortest way.

Our money, too, had run short. When furnishing ourselves, we had not calculated on a banquet, or beer and pipes for a guest. So I remember, after a very light breakfast, spending our last twopence on a drink of milk and a penny loaf, which latter we ate in Watford Churchyard, and then took our way over Stanmore to Edgware. It is a grand way of coming down upon London, and we grew cheery at the sight, but were rather discouraged when a brewer's man, driving a light cart, met our appeal for a lift with a "Waddle ye stand?" and as we could not stand anything at all, he whipped past with a grin.

And who was John Carpenter, to whom our holiday was due? He was Town Clerk in Henry the Fifth's time, and was friend and executor of Dick Whittington, and being minded to give others a chance of getting the learning which had been so useful to himself, he, in 1442, left by will certain houses and fields in Houndsditch, Cheapside, and Tottenham Court Road, for keeping four children of virtuous free-men at school, clothing them, and giving them a start in life. Carpenter's will is lost, but in 1663 the Corporation was paying yearly nineteen pounds ten shillings out of the estates—namely, eighteen pounds divided among four children, and one pound ten shillings to the Chamberlain for managing the estates. The absurdity of clothing, feeding, and teaching a boy or girl for ninety shillings a year never seems to have struck them. I say "or girl," for Dick Whittington's friend seems to have cared for the advancement of both sexes alike. His was the age for portioning out poor maidens, and giving them a chance of being the wives of future Whittingtons; but by-and-by that view of things got quite lost sight of. We know how stunted and altogether unworthy of its foundation is the girls' branch of the Bluecoat School, and even the second founder of Carpenter's school did not see his way—as now he doubtless would have done—to giving girls a share in the endowment.

Well, the Carpenter estates grew in

value, till, in 1833, the yearly rent was over nine hundred pounds net.

But the Corporation, following therein the example of dean and chapters and other conscienceless bodies of individually conscientious men, went on paying to the four boys the pittance which in Henry the Fifth's time had absorbed all the income. Lord Brougham's Charity Commission was just what was wanted to stir them up to a sense of duty; and they had then a man, Warren Stormes Hale, who determined that the abuse should be redressed, and that Carpenter's land should be so managed as to give the City—what it had never had since the old monkish days—a really good day-school free to all at an almost nominal charge. Carpenter, then, was the first founder, but Alderman Hale it was who gave new life to the old foundation. Only a tallow-chandler, not like the "City men" now who live at Brighton, or Croydon, or Surbiton, but one who had lived and worked amongst his men, and was not ashamed that everybody should know it. I fear the snobbishness of boys did not fully see the man behind the tallow; but still we did like and respect him, as we had good reason to do.

This school set the pattern in two things now almost universal—separate class-rooms ("the Prussian system," we used to be told, for the Fatherland even then was becoming self-asserting), and scholarships held at the school. These more than covered the school-fees, the cost of books, etc., and enabled (as they were meant to do) talented boys of poor parents to stay on and try for something at the Universities, almost the only kind of thing that, in those days before civil and other service competitions, could be tried for by lads without influence. I entered school too old to gain one of these, but I remember the holders were not looked down (as the free-boys used to be at grammar-schools), but quite the reverse. Very soon it became the fashion to found at the City School scholarships for Oxford and Cambridge. The "Times" set the example. Some gigantic fraud at Hamburg was exposed in time by the sagacity of their correspondent, and the City merchants raised a testimonial to the newspaper, which was applied to this purpose. Then the first Jew who ever sat in Parliament, Sir David Salamons, the O'Connell of the Hebrews, commemorated his triumph by founding a Salamons' scholarship. Others followed.

Now the school is rich beyond the

measure of any old foundation, and it is a curious thing that just when everything has been "thrown open" in this rage for doing away with founders' wills, and poor local men are often cut off from all share in the free school of their native place unless they can afford a grinder to prepare their boys to get a scholarship at it, the fashion should have been revived of founding prizes limited to one particular school. I am glad that it is so. I believe in local endowments, and I hold the destruction of them all over England to be a mistake almost as grievous as disestablishment would be. The old grammar-schools were shamefully abused; but they need not therefore have been practically closed to those for whom, in spite of quibbling, the founders meant them.

Well, my school is fine enough, and I suppose if a boy at one of the lower-grade schools—St. Thomas, Charterhouse, for instance—showed talent, he would be sent to compete for a Carpenter scholarship, and his parents would be thus encouraged to keep him on at school, and give him the chance of bringing his talent to the front. If he is what is called a boy of promise, he ought to have no difficulty in receiving a first-class education, not in classics and mathematics only, but also in chemistry and natural science, in which the school has always done well, and means, if one may judge from the splendid lecture-hall and laboratory, and experimenting-rooms at the top of the new building, to do still better.

Besides some twenty-five scholarships to the universities (several of them given by City companies; some of these, like the Broderers, being otherwise unknown to the general public), and one medical scholarship to St. Thomas's, the school has, as I said, scholarships tenable at school. They have grown in number since I was there. We had the eight Carpenter scholarships, giving twenty-five pounds a year at school for board, besides education free, and two pounds a year towards books, and fifty pounds on leaving school, which if the boy went to college was supplemented with one hundred pounds more. I know a worthy archdeacon who is not ashamed to say that to this help when help was needed he owes his present position. But, besides these, I see there are now eleven others; one for natural science (in memory of the late head-master, whom I loved too well to say much of him in public), one for Sanscrit, and four founded by Sir Albert David Sassoon, and two founded by Jews. Really,

if any talent is lost within the bills of mortality, it is not for want of educational help; if it does not "emerge," as the phrase is, the reason must be because it prefers to keep its head under water.

I have said so much about my school that I have left myself no space to speak of the other City schools. Therefore, I must put off till another paper what I have gleaned about them from books, and from friends who were at them while I was in Honey Lane Market.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III.

CHAPTER XII. "AFTER LIFE'S FITFUL FEVER."

ON that night of wild dispeace and mad contention, when Davey's footsteps had died into silence, and mother and daughter were left face to face, Hilda—trembling in every limb—still dazed from the effects of that sudden swoon which had seemed to her as the chill hand of death grasping her tired heart—went timidly to her mother's side.

"Mother," she said, "have you nothing to say to me, not one word of comfort for me, dear? Ah me! my heart is fit to break in twain to see my dear one suffer so, and for no sin of his, no sin of his!"

"All your thought is for the living lover; for the dead father you have none. Traitor that you are to the blood that beats in your false and cowardly heart!"

"Mother, mother, did you never know what it is to love? How it seems to fill one with longing to make the beloved one happy? How it teaches a poor weak woman, such as I, to try and be strong and full of a good courage, and to stand by the man I love, against the world?"

"While you sing to this tune, Hilda, I do not care to listen. I have said my say. Choose between him and me. I tell you I long to see him suffer. I should like to live to see him stripped of all his wealth, of all good men's honour, of all that makes life dearest to him—of the woman he loves with every beat of his passionate heart. I should like to see him hunted from the home that is his by wrong and not by right, and then I could die happy. Is he not his father's son? Did not death rob me of my vengeance once, just when all I longed for so madly seemed within my grasp? There is no fear of that now. The father was old and feeble. I was a fool to

fancy he could live through such an ordeal—a fool, a blind, besotted fool!—but the son is young and strong; death dare not lay its hand on such as he, and he is too good to seek death. Ah, I have counted up the chances till I know them off by heart! I have not blundered this time."

Hilda, watching the cruel lips that worked as they muttered, grew fearful of that awful figure of incarnate hate and lust of vengeance, whose name, for her, was "mother."

She shrank back against the wall; her hands were pressed upon her breast as if to still its panting; her eyes were wide and full of fear; her lips were drawn back from the pearl-white teeth set in the tension of pain.

"I watched him," continued Hester, seeming to speak rather to herself than to Hilda, "day by day, hour by hour; each day, each hour was sweeter to him than the last—sweeter to him and—to her. He was caught in the meshes of the net that fate and I had spread for him, and now—now the harvest of my longing is at hand, shall I let myself be foiled by a girl's whim, by a child's fancy for its latest toy? Not I—not I! Hilda, are you there?"

Something that might have been Hilda's wraith—so white, so wan, so full of shuddering horror did it seem—answered to that call; came trembling to her knee, and sunk there, gazing up at her with wide distended eyes.

Could it be Hester Devenant's voice that spoke? Could it be Hester Devenant's hand that touched the ruffled nut-brown hair so tenderly? Could it be Hester Devenant's lips that were laid upon that lovely brow, damp with the dew of pain and fear?

"You have thought me stern and hard. I have heard you sobbing my name in your sleep—praying to be loved 'only a little,' that your life might be less lonely, your heart less starved. Well, let us begin a new life together, child. I will promise you such love and tenderness as strong hard natures like mine do give, when they melt and soften. Your heart shall never more be starved—rather over-fed. We will be for ever each by the other, moved by the same thoughts, stirred by the same fancies. We will gather flowers from our garden, and take them together to your father's grave. There, as I tell you the story of his love and mine, dew that has its fountain in your eyes shall fall and glisten on their leaves. When you

were a baby-girl I was often hard with you, I know; but remember, child, I had been reared like that—had known no other training. It was not want of love! Often, as you slept, I have stood and watched you till the tears have blinded me—for my life was sad, the light that once had shone for me, shone no more; but now—now, we will try to make each other happy, will we not, my sweet, my sweet?"

What good angel had touched that hardened heart? What strange new birth had that dark spirit, in a moment's time, in the twinkling of an eye, passed through, becoming a new creature?

Hilda, in wild amaze and speechless rapture, clung about her mother, and, when the glad tears came, hid them upon her bosom.

Thus sheltered in what she deemed a newly-found and precious haven of tenderness, she could not see the evil, eager light that shone out in her mother's eyes, nor yet the hard triumphant smile that curved her lips.

Closer and closer grew the unaccustomed clasp of those enfolding arms; heavier and heavier pressed the hand that lay on Hilda's bowed head.

"These happy things shall come to pass, shall they not?" whispered Hester pleadingly; "shall they not, my darling? And you will give up this lover of yours—this felon's son? You will teach your heart and lips to curse him, as mine do?"

"Never, never!" cried Hilda, starting from the loving attitude of humility, and standing before her mother a beautiful figure of defiance. "He is good, noble, true! I shall pray for Heaven's best blessings on his head, as long as I have breath. Oh, mother, to think how he suffered here to-night—to think of the look on his dear face as he turned to Davey for comfort, and Davey had none to give! My God! shall I ever forget it? And I—I could do nothing to help him! I could do nothing but stand by—helpless and undone!"

A change came over Hester as she listened.

The light, the life, the eagerness died out of her face. It became as the face of a statue. She gathered her shawl about her shoulders, rose, and moved towards the door.

"Mother, mother!" cried Hilda, following, and catching at her sleeve; "are you going to leave me like this? Why has your heart hardened to me again?"

The poignant agony in her voice was such as might well have pleaded for her

with the cruellest; but Hester heard it unmoved.

She had played her last card. She was once more foiled in her scheme of vengeance; for did she not know, in her crafty soul, that to Ralph Stirling, house and lands, wealth and fame—all might be counted as "well lost," if but Hilda was his own?

Whatever blows fate had in store for him he could face them bravely, with Hilda's hand in his—Hilda's kisses of sweet comfort on his lips. He was panoplied in that invincible armour, the love of a fond and faithful woman.

Only through that strong and tender safeguard could his heart be stabbed; and now—the hand that might have wielded the barb, clung to him instead, and would not loose its passionate fond hold.

"Mother, one word," pleaded Hilda. "I do not love you less, because I love him so much. Forgive him, forgive him the only sin of which he is guilty, that of being his father's son, and we will try which can love you best—he or I! We will tend you, vie with each other in gentle service to you. He said to-night he would never take me from you. Mother, mother!"

She fell upon her knees, clutching her mother's dress, and hiding her quivering face among its folds.

Would pity conquer, after all? Would the love for her child, which Hester had said lay deep and hidden in her heart, rise and swamp that lust for revenge that, yielded to, had made her what she was—a miserable woman, self-tortured, torturing others, half mad, desolate indeed?

In the heavy silence which followed her last words, Hilda waited, panting out her breath in short quick sobs, praying in a wordless ecstasy of suffering; but she waited in vain.

At last, feeling the form to which she clung tremble, hoping against hope that a flood of tender yielding was making words impossible, she looked up.

Then she cried out, and her voice seemed to her own ears as that of a stranger, so hoarse, so changed, so charged with fear was it.

"Mother, what is it? Tell me; speak to me! What is it that you see?"

What indeed?

Some vision that called up a smile of ineffable tenderness—some vision to which Hester's hands were stretched as in a passion of love and longing.

Her eyes were staring out into the night

of dusky stirring shadows, and pale gleaming lights.

"See," she said, speaking hurriedly and seeming to labour for breath; "he is there, waiting for me, beckoning to me! Yes, I am coming, Gabriel; I am coming. Give me my cloak, and my gipsy-bonnet; he likes me best in that. I can go through the fir-wood, they will not see me; my brother is at the milking-sheds; the brindle cow is sick. Father is talking with old neighbour Dan, out in the porch; there is no fear, I tell you; give me my cloak."

Hilda, wild with fear, could but fling both arms about her mother as she knelt, and watch her in a stupor of amaze. It was a trance—a seizure, the result of long and dreadful strain—it would pass.

But why was that poor sunken cheek so pale and livid? Why so dim and fixed the staring eyes?

"Mother, mother! it is Hilda speaks to you! Do you not know me, dear? Look at me—speak to me. Oh, my God! what shall I do?"

Still deaf, still blind to all external things, Hester did but strain a step nearer to the open window that framed the picture of the night.

"I am coming," she whispered; "my love, I am coming to you now. How sweet the hay smells! I hear the sheep-bells tinkling in the fields by the river. Let us go there, Gabriel. Why do you not take my hand? Who is this that stands between us? He waves me back from you—he speaks."

A moment she stood silent, gasping for breath—her hands, clasped above her heart, tore at her dress as though some burning agony consumed her.

Then her voice rose high:

"Not that! Davey, Davey, do not call me that—anything but that! There is no blood upon my hands; let me go—let me go!"

With a wild despairing gesture, she flung up her arms, a harsh and strangled cry broke from her throat, and she fell heavily all her length, as one might do who is shot straight through the heart.

When the servants, startled by that fearful wail, came hurrying to the room, they found Hilda white and dumb, with her arms girding a dead form, and her tears and kisses falling on a dead face.

Once more death had wrested from Hilda Devenant's hand the cup of vengeance, ere her lips had tasted it.

CHAPTER-XIII. "... SHE SLEEPS WELL."

"It is I—Alicia."

The room was darkened. King Death was holding his solemn court. In the midst of the gloom that ever seems his most fitting surrounding lay the white marble effigy of a woman. Sometimes the touch of Azrael hardens. Here it had softened. Hester Devenant's cruel mouth was peaceful now in its still and noble lines. A faint smile lay upon it. The closed eyes—the hands crossed upon the quiet breast—all spoke of rest; and were the more solemn and striking, since in life both eyes and hands had been so restless.

Years ago Hilda had been possessed by the idea that her mother was always pursuing something. Now that long seeking was over; and to the sorrowing girl the absolute stillness, the unbroken repose, seemed a thing most strange and wonderful. So vast was the chasm between what life had been, and what death was, that there were moments in which she almost felt as though it were by the side of some stranger, and not by her mother's body that she kept an awful vigil.

On the pillow by the dead woman lay rare and delicate blossoms; flowers that had never budded and bloomed in the White House garden.

Against the twilight, made by curtained windows, was seen the silhouette of a bowed, tress-crowned head, a slender drooping figure.

"It is I—Alicia," said a tender, trembling voice again, and a light footstep crossed to Hilda's side. "I was ill, dear, I could not come before. Now I am here, you will not send me from you, will you?"

Alicia spoke timidly. The relation in which the two women stood to one another appeared to be reversed. As with most sensitive natures, in Alicia, repulse engendered timidity; and now she might have been the girl, and Hilda the matured woman, so wistful was her voice, so pleading her attitude. Hilda raised her head, and looked the vicar's wife full in the face. Her tear-dimmed eyes, looking earnestly and intently through the dusk, were like those of a spirit.

"Why should I send you away?" she said, drawing the other down beside her; "there is no shadow between us now."

"I felt the shadow come—it hurt me cruelly; for I loved you, Hilda, dearly; but I never knew its name."

"I had a secret to keep—or thought I

had—a terrible, cruel secret to keep—and I feared you, for I loved you so that it would have been hard to hide it from you. Such an agony of fear came over me at times that I grew weak, helpless, full of longing for some hand to hold in mine—some voice to say one word of comfort to me. I dare not let myself even think of you then. It was too much love, not too little, that drove me from you, dear."

"Poor child! poor child!"

Alicia's hair, once brown and ruddy as the ripened hazel-nut, was now thickly lined with grey; in her eyes was to be seen the mild and radiant shining that tells of a heart satisfied and at peace, and a life made full by perfect love and perfect sympathy. She had lived and loved; had waited, and won her heart's desire, and the lesson her own happiness had taught her was a tender and beautiful yearning to comfort those less happy than herself. The touch of her hand seemed to hold the grace of healing. Her voice fell with welcome cadence on the ear of sorrow.

After a while Hilda said:

"You have never asked me what my secret was."

"Because I know it already. You were afraid your mother was mad; you were afraid she might be taken from you if the world shared your secret. Ah, heart so strong and tender, how it must have ached!"

"It did—it did!"

"All seemed so dark—so dark and sad—and then the sunshine came, all the sweeter for the darkness that had gone before. Was it not so, child?"

"Yes, yes—so sweet, and oh, so precious! All the trouble died out; even that ghastly fear had less terror in it, and then—only that very night—he told me he would never part us—never take me from her. One can bear anything—cannot one?—when there are two to it."

As in a flash, the years of her wedded life came up before Alicia, while she answered with a sob-like catching of the breath:

"Yes, yes, whatever Heaven may send."

"And even now," said Hilda, "in all the sorrow of this terrible struggle to realise that what was a living, breathing creature so short a while ago is now but that, I have the same comfort still. Do you see the flowers upon her pillow? It was Ralph sent them from the house from which he soon will be exiled for ever."

As she spoke, the two women had risen from the wide low window-seat, and, hand in hand, had drawn nearer and nearer to the bier.

When close beside it, Hilda bent until her lips touched the white petals that were hardly whiter.

"My love," she sighed, "how good you are to me!"

Then she touched the lovely rippled lint-white hair parted on the icy brow of the dead, and sank on her knees, sobbing out that name that for her must henceforth be a name only:

"Mother, mother, and you loved me—after all!"

What a revelation were those two last words!

After all the struggle, and the lonely loveless life; after all the unrecognised devotion; after all the weary, unsatisfied longing, she had been loved!

Alicia Deane, kneeling by her side, not striving to stem the torrent of her grief, but only to make her feel that that torrent had not to be met alone, was not without a feeling of self-reproach as she looked at the dead white face and folded hands of the woman whom she had steadily disliked and mistrusted.

Had she not, after all, been harsh in her judgment? Had the bitter resentment that swayed Hester's whole life, that had been blind and distorted, unreasoning and unrelenting, been wholly unjust? Was it not wrong rather in the manner of it than in the fact of its existence? Might not she—Alicia—have been less ready to condemn that which she could not understand? have made more persevering efforts to win, and, maybe, to soften?

As these thoughts grew in her, she prayed for God's mercy on the passionate sad soul that had passed away from earth for ever, and then she cast her arm about the shaken form beside her, drew the poor aching head upon her breast, and vowed to her own heart and to God, that for Hilda a mother's care and love should never more be lacking.

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MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LX. MR. SCARBOROUGH IS BURIED.

WHEN Mr. Scarborough died, and when he had been buried, his son Mountjoy was left alone at Tretton, living in a very desolate manner. Till the day of the funeral, Merton, the doctor, had remained with him, and his aunt, Miss Scarborough. But when the old squire had been laid in his grave they both departed. Miss Scarborough was afraid of her nephew, and could not look forward to living comfortably at the big house; and Dr. Merton had the general work of his life to call him away. "You might as well stay for another week," Mountjoy had said to him. But Merton had felt that he could not remain at Tretton without some especial duty, and he too went his way.

The funeral had been very strange. Augustus had refused to come and stand at his father's grave. "Considering all things, I had rather decline," he had written to Mountjoy. No other guests were invited, except the tenants. They came in a body, for the squire had been noted among them as a liberal landlord. But a crowd of tenants does not in any way make up that look of family sorrow, which is expected at the funeral of such a man as Mr. Scarborough. Mountjoy was there, and stood through the ceremony speechless, and almost sullen. He went down to the church behind the coffin with Merton, and then walked away from the ground without having uttered a syllable. But during the ceremony he had seen that which had caused him to be sullen. Mr. Samuel Hart had been there, and Mr. Tyrrwhit. And

there was a man whom he called to his mind as connected with the names of Evans and Crooke, and Mr. Spicer, and Mr. Richard Juniper. He knew them all as they stood there round the grave, not in decorous funereal array, but as strangers who had strayed into the cemetery. He could not but feel, as he looked at them and they at him, that they had come to look after their interest—their heavy interest on the money which had been fraudulently repaid to them. He knew that they had parted with their bonds. But he knew also that almost all that was now his would have been theirs, had they not been cheated into believing that he, Mountjoy Scarborough, was not, and never would be, Scarborough of Tretton Park. They said nothing as they stood there, and did not in any way interrupt the ceremony; but they looked at Mountjoy as they were standing, and their looks disconcerted him terribly.

He had declared that he would walk back to the house, which was not above two miles distant from the graveyard, and therefore, when the funeral was over, there was no carriage to take him. But he knew that the men would dog his steps as he walked. He had only just got within the precincts of the park when he saw them all. But Mr. Tyrrwhit was by himself, and came up to him. "What are you going to do, Captain Scarborough," he said, "as to our claims?"

"You have no claims of which I am aware," he said roughly.

"Oh yes, Captain Scarborough; we have claims certainly. You've come up to the front lately with a deal of luck; I don't begrudge it, for one; but I have claims—I and those other gentlemen; we have claims. You'll have to admit that."

"Send in the documents. Mr. Barry is

acting as my lawyer; he is Mr. Grey's partner, and is now taking the leading share in the business."

"I know Mr. Barry well; a very sharp gentleman is Mr. Barry."

"I cannot enter into conversation with yourself at such a time as this."

"We are sorry to trouble you; but then our interests are so pressing. What do you mean to do, Captain Scarborough? That's the question."

"Yes; with the estate," said Mr. Samuel Hart, coming up and joining them. Of the lot of men, Mr. Samuel Hart was the most distasteful to Mountjoy. He had last seen his Jew persecutor at Monaco, and had then, as he thought, been grossly insulted by him. "What are you hafter, captain?" To this Mountjoy made no answer, but Hart, walking a step or two in advance, turned upon his heel and looked at the park around him. "Tidy sort of place, ain't it, Tyrrwhit, for a gentleman to hang his 'at up in, when we were told he was a bastard, not worth a shilling?"

"I have nothing to do with all that," said Mountjoy; "you and Mr. Tyrrwhit held my acceptances for certain sums of money. They have, I believe, been paid in full."

"No, they ain't; they ain't been paid in full at all; you knows they ain't." As he said this, Mr. Hart walked on in front, and stood in the pathway, facing Mountjoy. "How can you 'ave the cheek to say we've been paid in full? You know it ain't true."

"Evans and Crooke haven't been paid, so far," said a voice from behind."

"More ain't Spicer," said another voice.

"Captain Scarborough, I haven't been paid in full," said Mr. Juniper, advancing to the front. "You don't mean to tell me that my five hundred pounds have been paid in full? You've ruined me, Captain Scarborough. I was to have been married to a young lady with a large fortune—your Mr. Grey's niece—and it has been broken off altogether, because of your bad treatment. Do you mean to assert that I have been paid in full?"

"If you have got any document, take it to Mr. Barry."

"No, I won't; I won't take it to any lawyer. I'll take it right in before the Court, and expose you. My name is Juniper, and I've never parted with a morsel of paper that has your name to it."

"Then, no doubt, you'll get your money," said the captain.

"I thought, gentlemen, you were to allow me to be the spokesman on this occasion," said Mr. Tyrrwhit. "We certainly cannot do any good if we attack the captain all at once. Now, Captain Scarborough, we don't want to be uncivil."

"Uncivil be blowed!" said Mr. Hart; "I want to get my money, and mean to 'ave it. I agreed as you was to speak, Mr. Tyrrwhit; but I means to be spoken up for; and if no one else can do it, I can do it myself. Is we to have any settlement made to us, or is we to go to law?"

"I can only refer you to Mr. Barry," said Mountjoy, walking on very rapidly. He thought that when he reached the house he might be able to enter in and leave them out, and he thought also that, if he kept them on the trot, he would thus prevent them from attacking him with many words. Evans and Crooke was already lagging behind, and Mr. Spicer was giving signs of being hard pressed. Even Hart, who was younger than the others, was fat and short, and already showed that he would have to halt if he made many speeches.

"Barry be blowed!" exclaimed Hart.

"You see how it is, Captain Scarborough," said Tyrrwhit; "your father, as has just been laid to rest in hopes of a happy resurrection, was a very peculiar gentleman."

"The most hinferral swindler I ever 'eard tell of," said Hart.

"I don't wish to say a word disrespectful," continued Tyrrwhit, "but he had his own notions. He said as you was illegitimate,—didn't he now?"

"I can only refer you to Mr. Barry," said Mountjoy.

"And he said that Mr. Augustus was to have it all; and he proved his words. Didn't he now? And then he made out that, if so, our deeds weren't worth the paper they were written on. Isn't it all true what I'm saying? And then when we'd taken what small sums of money he chose to offer us, just to save ourselves from ruin, then he comes up and says you are the heir, as legitimate as anybody else, and are to have all the property. And he proves that too! What are we to think about it?"

There was nothing left for Mountjoy Scarborough but to make the pace as good as possible. Mr. Hart tried once and

again to stop their progress by standing in the captain's path, but could only do this sufficiently at each stoppage to enable him to express his horror with various interjections. "Oh laws! that such a liar as 'e should ever be buried."

"You can't do anything by being disrespectful, Mr. Hart," said Tyrrwhit.

"What—is it—he means—to do?" ejaculated Spicer.

"Mr. Spicer," said Mountjoy, "I mean to leave it all in the hands of Mr. Barry; and if you will believe me, no good can be done by any of you by hunting me across the park."

"Hare you illegitimate, or haren't you?" ejaculated Hart.

"No, Mr. Hart, I am not."

"Then pay us what you owes us. You ain't a going to say as you don't owe us."

"Mr. Tyrrwhit," said the captain, "it is of no use my answering Mr. Hart, because he is angry."

"Angry! By George! I am angry! I'd like to pull that old sinner's bones out of the ground!"

"But to you I can say that Mr. Barry will be better able to tell you than I am what can be done by me to defend my property."

"Captain Scarborough," said Mr. Tyrrwhit mildly, "we had your name, you know. We did have your name."

"And my father bought the bonds back."

"Oh laws! And he calls himself a shentleman!"

"I have nothing further to say to you now, gentlemen, and can only refer you to Mr. Barry." The path on which they were walking had then brought them to the corner of a garden wall, through which a door opened into the garden. Luckily, at the moment, it occurred to Mountjoy that there was a bolt on the other side of the gate; and he entered in quickly and bolted the door. Mr. Tyrrwhit was left on the other side, and was joined by his companions as quickly as their failing breath enabled them to do so. "'Ere's a go," said Mr. Hart, striking the door violently with the handle of his stick.

"He had nothing for it but to leave us when we attacked him altogether," said Mr. Tyrrwhit. "If you had left it to me he would have told us what he intended to do. You, Mr. Hart, had not so much cause to be angry, as you had received a

considerable sum for interest." Then Mr. Hart turned upon Mr. Tyrrwhit, and abused him all the way back to their inn. But it was pleasant to see how these commercial gentlemen, all engaged in the natural course of trade, expressed their violent indignation, not so much as to their personal losses, but at the commercial dishonesty generally of which the Scarboroughs, father and son, had been and were about to be guilty.

Mountjoy, when he reached the house of which he was now the only occupant besides the servants, stood for an hour in the dining-room with his back towards the fire, thinking of his position. He had many things of which to think. In the first place there were these pseudo-creditors who had just attacked him in his own park with much acrimony. He endeavoured to comfort himself by telling himself that they were certainly pseudo-creditors, to whom he did not in fact owe a penny. Mr. Barry could deal with them. But then his conscience reminded him that they had in truth been cheated,—cheated by his father for his benefit. For every pound which they had received they would have claimed three or four. They would no doubt have cheated him. But how was he now to measure the extent of his father's fraud against that of his creditors? And, though it would have been right in him to resist the villainy of these Jews, he felt that it was not fit that he should escape from their fangs altogether by his father's deceit. He had not become so dead to honour but that "noblesse oblige" did still live within his bosom. And yet there was nothing that he could do to absolve his bosom. The income of the estate was nearly clear, the money brought in by the late sales having all but sufficed to give these gentlemen that which his father had chosen to pay them. But was he sure of that income? He had just now asserted boldly that he was the legitimate heir to the property. But did he know that he was so? Could he believe his father? Had not Mr. Grey asserted that he would not accept this later evidence? Was he not sure that Augustus intended to proceed against him; and was he not aware that nothing could be called his own till that lawsuit should have been decided? If that should be given against him, then these harpies would have been treated only too well; then there would be no question at any rate by him as to what "noblesse oblige" might require of him!

He could take no immediate step in regard to them, and therefore for the moment drove that trouble from his mind.

But what should he do with himself as to his future life? To be persecuted and abused by these wretched men, as had this morning been his fate, would be intolerable. Could he shut himself up from Mr. Samuel Hart and still live in England? And then could he face the clubs,—if the clubs would be kind enough to re-elect him? And then there came a dark frown across his brow, as he bethought himself that, even at this moment, his heart was longing to be once more among the cards. Could he not escape to Monaco, and there be happy among the gambling-tables? Mr. Hart would surely not follow him there, and he would be free from the surveillance of that double blackguard, his brother's servant and his father's spy.

But, after all, as he declared to himself, did it not altogether turn on the final answer which he might get from Florence Mountjoy? Could Florence be brought to accede to his wishes, he thought that he might still live happily, respectably, and in such a manner that his name might go down to posterity not altogether blasted. If Florence would consent to live at Tretton, then could he remain there. He thought it over, as he stood there with his back to the fire, and he told himself that with Florence the first year would be possible, and that after the first year the struggle would cease to be a struggle. He knew himself, he declared, and he made all manner of excuses for his former vicious life, basing them all on the hardness of her treatment of him. He did not know himself, and such assurances were vain. But buoyed up by such assurances, he resolved that his future fate must be in her hands, and that her word alone could suffice either to destroy him or to save him.

Thinking thus of his future life, he resolved that he would go at once to Cheltenham, and throw himself, and what of Tretton belonged to him, at the girl's feet. Nor could he bear to rest another night at Tretton till he had done so. He started at once, and got late to Gloucester, where he slept, and on the next morning at eleven o'clock, was at Cheltenham, out on his way to Montpelier Terrace. He at once asked for Florence, but circumstances so arranged themselves that he first found himself closeted with her mother. Mrs. Mountjoy was delighted

and yet shocked to see him. "My poor brother!" she said; "and he was buried only yesterday!" Such explanation as Mountjoy could give was given. He soon made the whole tenor of his thoughts intelligible to her. "Yes; Tretton was his; at least he supposed so. As to his future life he could say nothing. It must depend on Florence. He thought that if she would promise to become at once his wife, there would be no more gambling. He had felt it to be incumbent on him to come and tell her so."

Mrs. Mountjoy, frightened by the thorough blackness of his apparel, and by the sternness of his manner, had not a word to say to him in opposition. "Be gentle with her," she said, as she led the way to the room in which Florence was found. "Your cousin has come to see you," she said; "has come immediately after the funeral. I hope you will be gracious to him." Then she closed the door, and the two were alone together.

"Florence," he said.

"Mountjoy! We hardly expected you here so soon."

"Where the heart strays, the body is apt to follow. I could speak to no one, I could do nothing, I could hope and pray for nothing till I had seen you."

"You cannot depend on me like that," she answered.

"I do depend on you most entirely. No human being can depend more thoroughly on another. It is not my fortune that I have come to offer you or simply my love; but in very truth my soul."

"Mountjoy, that is wicked."

"Then wicked let it be. It is true. Tretton by singular circumstances is all my own, free of debt. At any rate I and others believe it to be so."

"Tretton being all your own can make no difference."

"I told you that I had not come to offer you my fortune." And he almost scowled at her as he spoke. "You know what my career has hitherto been; though you do not perhaps know what has driven me to it. Shall I go back, and live after the same fashion, and let Tretton go to the dogs? It will be so unless you take me and Tretton into your hands."

"It cannot be."

"Oh, Florence, think of it before you pronounce my doom."

"It cannot be. I love you well as my cousin, and for your sake I love Tretton also. I would suffer much to save you, if

any suffering on my part would be of avail. But it cannot be in that fashion." Then he scowled again at her. "Mountjoy, you frighten me by your hard looks, but though you were to kill me you cannot change me. I am the promised wife of Harry Annesley. And, for his honour, I must bid you plead this cause no more."

Then just at this moment there was a ring at the bell and a knock at the door, each of them somewhat impetuous, and Florence Mountjoy, jumping up with a start, knew that Harry Annesley was there.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

LANCASHIRE. PART I.

A PIECE of Lancashire first of all that hardly seems to belong to it by rights, lying apart from the rest of the county, and only to be reached directly by a journey across the very bed of the sea; a transit across the yellow sands, worth taking for the grand scene it affords of indented coast-line, with mountain and fell in many soft gradations of colour—the pleasure of it heightened by a sense of insecurity.

"God protect us in passing the Raz," prays the Breton fisherman; "Thy sea is so big and our bark so small!" And we have the same feeling here, mere dots of human insects crawling over the wide waste of sands, while the mighty sea lies crouching below the horizon in the blue uncertain haze, and shall come presently like a lion seeking its prey. Nor is the danger altogether imaginary; for the sea claims always its due tale of victims, letting the score run on sometimes, and then sweeping in its arrears with savage vindictiveness. More than a hundred lie buried in Cartmel churchyard, in the graveyard of the old priory church, the priory that once was charged with the duty, or perhaps rather claimed the privilege, of providing guides and horses for those who crossed the sands. And the peninsula of Cartmel is a stepping-place of firm earth in the transit; we have crossed the bed of the river Kent, and have only to cross the narrower estuary of the Leven. Half-way across this latter is a little island called Chapel Island with remains of a tiny chapel, built by the monks of Furness, to whose ancient domain we are travelling. In this chapel prayers were offered up daily for the souls of such as crossed the sands

with the morning tide. And thence, no doubt, shone a kindly light, a light of leading and guidance for those who perforce must cross by night. Most people now make the transit by rail, that crosses the double estuary on an embankment—a fine work of the later railway period—but not without touching a corner of Westmoreland, and query whether the sheriff with his following in pursuit of evil-doers would not have lost his official virtue in the process. And this suggests a thought whether the wily monks of Furness did not purposely compass the annexation of their district to distant Lancashire that they might be completely kings in their own domain and the king's sheriff as inaccessible as could be. For if, as county historians say, this district were part of Westmoreland up to the thirteenth century, there seems no other reason for the change.

Furness, no doubt, is Far or Further Ness. Some people would have it more romantically—Fire Ness perhaps from some ancient beacon or sea-mark. Fierynose, indeed, not inaptly descriptive of this promontory of red iron ore, where everything assumes a red and rusty tinge. And so in place of the good monks of Furness, we have the iron barons of the present day—they hardly rise to the rank of princes, perhaps—whose handsome lightsome mansions are fast superseding the gloomy old halls of the ancient gentry.

For ages, indeed, has Furness been noted for its iron; the monks had their bloomeries, rude furnaces of clay, where alternate layers of ore and charcoal were piled till the furnace was full, when the whole was fired, and the blast from a primitive bellows of skins driven through the mass. When the dross began to amass above the melted iron, the molten metal was drawn from the bottom into a basin-like hollow scooped in front of the furnace. The iron thus produced was of excellent quality—so good that the Scotch in their raids would lay hands upon all they could find in Furness, while they disregarded such ponderous ware in a general way. But the great iron-works of to-day are quite of modern origin. As on the east coast on the Tees, so here in the west, not on a river at all, but on a convenient arm of the sea, with an excellent break-water in the shape of the long island of Walney, a new town has sprung up like magic. Thirty years ago a village, and not much of a village at that, and now a

flourishing place with public buildings, banks, magnificent docks, and ship-building yards, where they will turn you out an ocean steamer with less ado than of old was made about the launching of a fishing-boat.

Ulverstone, too, is quite modernised with a thriving manufacturing air, hardly to be recognised by its original founder, Ulph, or Wolf, or Guelph, who must have been a considerable Thane before the Conquest; his name, indeed, literally written in water—Ulfswater or Ullswater, where he made his fortified dwelling, still known as L'ulph's or Lyulph's tower. But of him nothing more remains than the name repeated here and there in names of places throughout the district. Perhaps Ulf was driven out by Urse—the wolf by the bear—God's curse, as the people he ruled over called him, one of Norman William's great barons, who has left nothing beside his evil fame and the name of Urswick to a village close by Ulverstone.

But the central point of historic Furness must be sought at the abbey, an abbey with a station to itself; its own hotel, where hospitality is dispensed to all comers, quite in the mediæval way. Nothing easier to be done in abbeys than this; to be taken after dinner with a cigar, or to be lounged over in slippers in the morning before breakfast. And yet are still richly to be enjoyed the greensward and grey silent ruins, the fertility and richness of the vale—the valley of Nightshade as it is sometimes called (and sprigs of nightshade appeared on the ancient seal of the abbey), the herb being still plentiful in the vale, but known before the days of the monks as Beckangill, or the valley of the little brook, the little brook or beck that still murmurs among the ruins unchanged, while everything else is transformed.

As far as we know there was no Scottish or Saxon religious settlement at Furness; all was virgin soil when Ewan d'Avranches—from the Norman town that looks over at Mont St. Michel—with twelve brethren landed on the coast and found a suitable spot for a convent in the valley of Nightshade. Ewan, perhaps, was himself a Breton, and anyhow the new convent seems to have at first owned as its superior the Abbey of Savigny, and indeed this expedition was no doubt part of the religious immigration which founded the principal abbeys in Yorkshire—the abbeys with the Frenchified names—and

like these, Furness in due time joined the confraternity of the reformed monks of St. Bernard, owning as the mother settlement the Abbey of Citeaux in France.

That worthy peer, Stephen, munificent in his gifts to the religious, if economical in attire, was the chief benefactor of the infant settlement. While yet he was only Stephen the earl he granted to the abbey the whole lordship of Furness, the Isle of Walney—once, perhaps, a station of the Walmen or whale-fishers, who pursued the cetaceæ that once swarmed in these northern seas (even now a whale ashore on Morecambe sands is not an unknown occurrence)—the towns of Dalton and Ulverstone, with all the serfs and tenants pertaining to the lands; the whole, indeed, of this nook of Lancashire. High Furness, with its mountains and lakes, and Low Furness or Plain Furness with its rich pastures, over all were the monks to rule as lords and masters, excepting only one manor that was held directly from the crown by a stout knight, Le Fleming, whose castle, now called Gleaston, a ruin of shattered towers and curtain wall, overlooked the Bay of Morecambe. And if Stephen, soon to be King of England, was munificent, no less was the King of Man, who granted the community lands in his island to build a monastery. The Kings of Man were the natural patrons of Iona, the ancient storehouse of their bones, but Olave, the king in question, had been brought up at the English court, and preferred the more modern type of monasticism that he found at Furness. He ordained, too, that in future the bishoprics of the Southern Isles and Man should be held by one of the community of Furness. And thus we find every now and then a monk of Furness exchanging the cowl for the bishop's mitre.

With all this power and prosperity the numbers of the abbey increased till it was necessary to send out swarms here and there. One went to the banks of the Calder, to be presently driven in by raiding Scots, and received with such contumely by the abbot, who had thought to have been finally rid of them, that they sought a more peaceful resting-place in the wilds of Yorkshire, and finally settled at Byland Abbey. Another swarm migrated as far as Lincolnshire, and founded a colony at Swinstead, and in the next century we find an offshoot of the abbey at Drogheda in Ireland, where Walter de Lacy, Lord of

Meath, had granted them lands. The thirteenth century, perhaps, saw the abbey at the height of its power and dignity under one Robert de Denton, whose tombstone—a broken part of it, at least—is still to be seen at the abbey, the legend plainly to be read: Robertus de Furnesii Quint. He was the eighteenth abbot in reality, but a curious custom prevailed at Furness of only recording as abbots those who had held the pastoral staff for ten years at least, and of these Robert was only the fifth. Under his rule the abbey acquired the much-coveted Naboth's vineyard of the Fleming, buying his homage of the king for four hundred marks, the abbey now being undisputed lord of the whole peninsula. In his day, too, Reginald, King of Man, killed in battle on the island, was brought to Furness, and buried with due honour; while some of the best parts of the abbey were built in the days of this stirring abbot. Then were the iron mines most actively worked, and the general revenues most flourishing, while from this point there is decadence slow but sure. In the next century we have Robert Bruce wasting and devastating the land, but feasted and feed by the Abbot of Furness, who persuaded him to spare the sacred buildings—the Scot resembled the sapeur of more recent days, to whom nothing was sacred that he could lay hands upon—but if the abbey was spared, farms and homesteads were laid waste, and there was but meagre fare for long after in the refectory. In the fifteenth century, the monks still feeling the pressure of straitened means, strove to turn an honest penny, and successfully, as it seems, by smuggling. There was then a heavy tax on the export of wool, which our pious Cistercians evaded by chartering a two hundred ton ship from the Peele of Foddray, with contraband wool, which successfully ran the blockade to Flanders.

But whatever their weaknesses may have been, and their love of contraband, whatever their faults, and they seem to have had plenty, we must ever think kindly of the Cistercians, who have rendered fertile so many pleasant nooks, and have left such charming secluded ruins up and down the land. They planted, they watered, they turned barren hill-sides into verdant groves. The music of the soft chiming bells is silenced; the solemn chants of the sweet-voiced choir. But the birds are still left to us, that warble nowhere more sweetly than about these old abbeys and priories,

where they have built and paired year after year, keeping up the matins and evensong they learnt from the monks lang syne.

Abbot Roger Pele, or Pyle, was the last of the line, the last to bear the ring and staff, "of a very facile and redy mynde," and fated to surrender to the king all the possessions of the abbey. Not of the stuff of his countryman, the stout abbot of Whatley, who was hanged at his abbey gates, was Roger Pele, but of a better stuff for wearing, and so we find him living on comfortably as parson of Dalton.

The king had a great sale of everything that could be sold, and the country people flocked in and got wonderful bargains. There were a hundred and twenty milch cows to be sold—how delightful the syllabubs must have been when the monks entertained their friends under the trees!—great bargains and great rejoicings went on thereat, nobody caring very much for the old order of things passing away; perhaps not even the monks themselves, departing one by one, each with forty shillings in his pocket, out of which he had to purchase secular garments. And then down with the roofs for the sake of the lead, and away with carved oak and tabernacle work for old lumber; and then bramble and briar grew about the tombs of knights and barons bold, and ivy twirled itself over shrines and canopies. The abbot's house was turned into the manor-house, and part of it still exists in the present hotel.

A striking memorial of the rule and power of the monks is the Peel, or castle, on Foudrey Isle, built as a protection to the haven and a place of refuge against the incursions of the Scots; still an impressive ruin in its desolate grandeur, with fine views of bay and distant mountain chains, a depth of colour and brightness recalling Mediterranean shores. Another castle, too, had the monks on the mainland, to guard the approach to the abbey; a tower which still stands on a rock eminence near Dalton-in-Furness.

As the monks disappeared from Furness the district became a nursery of the new faith. Nowhere else were formed more fanatical adherents of that sturdy independence in matters of religion which has given rise to so many sects both here and in America. At Tottlebank is perhaps the very oldest Baptist chapel, founded 1669, with an old Cromwellian Ironside as one of its first members.

At Marsh Grange, on the River Dudden, near Kirkby Ireleth, an old hall now occupied as a farm, lived the Askews, county gentry of repute, and one of this family, Mistress Anne Askew, a woman endowed with wit, beauty, and religion, suffered in the reign of Mary. At twenty-five years of age she was racked in the Tower, Gardiner and Bonner looking on and disputing with the poor creature in the intervals of her torture; and then given to the flames at Smithfield. A descendant of Anne Askew the martyr of 1546, married one of the Fells—the Fells of Swartmoor Hall, near Ulverstone—Swartmoor, so-called it is said from the German General Swartz, who there mustered the forces of Lambert Simnel, on his landing here from Ireland to maintain his title as one of the young princes reputed to have been murdered in the Tower.

The Fells were a family who had given their hard northern heads to the law, and Margaret's husband was one of the judges of the land under the Lord Protector. A well-provided house was this of Swartmoor, under the sway of the lively and spiritual Margaret, with an hospitable table for all the world, and especially for ministers of religion. And here one day appeared a strange primitive figure, a man of between thirty and forty years old, in a strange uncouth garb of coarsest materials, his long lank hair, matted and uncombed, hanging down to his shoulders; stout and muscular, very quiet in demeanour, but with a wonderfully persuasive tongue. Strangely scriptural suggestions there were about the man, his mien and bearing, filling the imaginations of Margaret Fell and her fair daughters with mystic spiritual sunshine. Justice Fell was on circuit, but there was a son in the house, given to racing and cock-fighting, who would have none of this man; although the women hung upon his words. George Fox himself, for this was the apostolic stranger, records how Margaret Fell took him to the steeple-house, where he held forth to minister and people. Justice Sawrey—"justice of the peace and cust-alorum"—had him hauled out by the parish constables; but Fox could hold forth at Swartmoor as long as he pleases. Judge Fell, however, was now on his way home from circuit, and some of the gentry of the county rode to meet him on the sands—rode at him open-mouthed and eager to be the first to tell him the unwelcome news that his wife and daughters were

bewitched by a strange man, and all the house at sixes and sevens. And the judge came home in a pretty temper, but was appeased by feminine blandishments; and then Fox was mighty in the scripture, and the judge listened, and was almost persuaded to become a Friend.

Judge Fell died just a month after his master, the Lord Protector; and, with the Restoration, trouble came unto Margaret, his widow. For meetings went on at Swartmoor Hall—meetings and exercisings of the spirit, all very obnoxious to the racing, cock-fighting squires; to George Fell, the son, amongst the rest, who, it is said, was among those who complained of the doings at the hall; an information which brought Mistress Fell before the justices as a malignant. Margaret had been to London before this, and had seen the king himself, swarthy Charles, who was not, perhaps, such a king's man as the squires of North Lancashire, and anyhow a gentleman. "God forbid that I should hinder you of your religion," said the king. "You may keep it in your own houses." But in spite of all this, Margaret must go to prison, she across the sands to Lancaster, and George Fox to Scarborough Castle, and there they remained for five years; and then times changing in favour of toleration, they were released, and Margaret went home to Swartmoor, to get her daughters married—one of them, Sarah, beautiful and lovely, eloquent in discoursing and preaching: the preaching quite tolerable under such conditions one would think. Anyhow they were all married, and Margaret set forth on a pilgrimage, visiting all the gaols where Friends were confined, bringing comfort and solace to the prisoners; the spiritual, if not the actual, ancestress of good Mrs. Fry. At Bristol she met George Fox, and the two old friends coming together in the decline of life, married and lived together at Swartmoor. And at Swartmoor, George Fox founded a meeting-house that might well be a place of pilgrimage for Friends and their descendants all the world over.

The deed of gift is still in existence, in which Fox offers and freely gives up to the Lord, with house, and barns, and kilns, "also my ebony bedstead with the painted curtains"—of Indian cotton, no doubt, the original of our chintzes and cretonnes—"and the great elbow-chair that Robert Widder sent me, and my great sea-case with the bottles in it, to stand in the house as heirlooms, so that friends may have a bed to lie on,

a chair to sit on, and a bottle to hold a little water to drink." And the elbow-chair is still to be seen at the meeting-house, while the ebony bedstead has undergone a change, its twisted parts appearing as door-jambs. There, too, is to be seen Fox's Bible, a fine copy of what is known as the "Treacle Bible," from the verse rendered, "Is there not tryacle in Gilead?"

As far as antiquity goes, Cartmel Priory, on the peninsula already mentioned—the half-way station in crossing the sands—might dispute the palm with Furness. This was an offshoot from Lindisfarn; indeed, with memories of early Northumbrian kings; but falling to decay, was refounded by William the Marshall, soon after Furness. Its monks were Augustinians, of less strict rule and of more liberal spirit than their neighbours. The church of the priory still exists, converted into the parish church, and is worth a visit, with its old monuments and early English choir; it lies a little out of the tourist track, equi-distant from Grange, a lively little watering-place, and Cark, which in a general way supports a public conveyance for Newby Bridge, at the foot of Windermere. For the general drift of everybody is towards the lake country, some of the finest scenes in which are to be found in Upper Furness.

A pleasant pilgrimage it is to follow the river Duddon—Wordsworth's Duddon, long-loved Duddon—to its source from the slaty miney little town of Broughton-in-Furness, that stands at the head of the estuary famous for cockles, with its little port, and coasters loading with slates and ore, and along the swift brawling river, to where it rises among the hills, near the three shire stones at the top of Wrynose. And then to visit the lonely Old Man in his seat above the fells of Furness, and Coniston that is by no means lonely, but crowded with tourists in the summer-time; with its railway to itself, affording perhaps a better entry into the lake district than any other. And from Coniston the traveller, unimpeded by county boundaries, is upon the grandest range of ridge and valley in the whole country. But our topographical limits compel us to the tamer but still beautiful route to Hawkshead, passing the head of Coniston Water—Hawkshead with its homely and efficient grammar-school, where Wordsworth passed his school-days. Here, in the days of hand-spinning, was a capital market for spun wool, which the country people sold to the sturdy trader who had

ridden over hill and dale from Kendal. Here is an old hall, now partly converted into farm-buildings, where the bailiff of the town administered justice in the name of the Abbot of Furness.

Hawkshead church stands on high ground above the town, a sturdy squat tower, with fine views of Esthwaite valley and lake; within, a fine tomb to the memory of the father and mother of Archbishop Sandys, who founded the grammar-school in Queen Elizabeth's days. There is a Sandys still among the governors of the school. Here, in the old school-house, is to be seen the battered old school-desk, scored with Wordsworth's name, and other curiosities: an old muniment-chest with iron-bands and many padlocks, and the almost unique common seal of the school, displaying the dominie enthroned with a birch-rod in his hand, dominus in a ruff and flat cap of Elizabethan pattern, and the birch, a spreading rod of many twigs, hardly so formidable as the modern instrument of torture. A fine institution, this school; virtually, a free school, with fees of twenty-five shillings a quarter in the upper school, and half-a-crown a quarter in the lower; a fine inheritance for the dalesmen and a pattern of many such throughout Cumbria in general.

Esthwaite Water is divided from Windermere by the heights of Latterbarrow; with a lonely hamlet among the hills, called Claife, and near there a disused quarry in a wild and lonely spot, a place avoided by all the countryside, connected with a weird legend, known as The Crier of Claife, that may here be briefly told.

It was long ago, in the time of the monks of Furness, on a wild and windy night, that a number of country-people had gathered at the little tavern by the ferry on the Westmoreland side of Windermere, the ferryman one of the party, all snug and comfortable by the ingle-nook; when, through the howling of the wind could be heard piercing cries and shouts for a boat, as if from the ferry-nab, or point, on the other side, by some person in dire peril or distress. The boon companions at the tavern urged the ferryman to take no heed of the summons on such a wild and woful night, when the waters of the lake were rolling in like a sea. But the ferryman had the pride of his calling. No traveller who dared to cross should summon him in vain. And so he fared forth across the stormy waters, while his friends waited anxiously

on the bank listening to the weird and still repeated cries. Presently these were silent, and through scud and flying vapour the boat could be made out slowly returning to the shore. But the ferryman returned alone, or, if aught was with him, it was invisible to mortal eyes. Only, as the ferryman landed, his friends saw that a sad change had come over him; his face was frozen with terror, his power of speech taken away. The man took to his bed and died without revealing what had befallen him; and from that time the Crier of Claife was often to be heard at night from the ferry-nab crying in vain for a boat. At last, the aid of the holy men of Furness was sought, and a monk was appointed to exorcise the supposed demon. The people of the vale were solemnly assembled on an island in Windermere, one of the prettiest islands on the lake—Lady Holme or St. Mary's Isle—where the monks had built a chapel, and where mass was regularly served by someone from the abbey. The people were gathered in this chapel, and the demon was formally summoned and brought to book. Then the congregation in solemn procession, headed by the priest, took boat and away to the lonely quarry by Claife, where, with bell, and book, and candle, the demon was finally laid. But still the cries can be heard of wild nights by the ferry-nab, and people of the countryside tell stories of missing men. A school-master, not so long ago, it is said, was beguiled and led to destruction by the voice of the Crier of Claife.

Perhaps the people of Upper Furness are a trifle superstitious, having lived secluded and cut off until these recent days of railways over the sands. So that strangers used to be called offcomes—as coming off the mainland of Lancashire, no doubt. And a kind of Scandinavian savagery long lingered about some of their customs, as in the Dalton Hunt, described as the Dalton rout in *The Tatler*, when at the hunt dinner the steaming bowl of punch was stirred with the gory mask of the recently killed fox. But since the development of the mining industry, the salient features of the native race have been in a great measure obliterated by an influx of settlers from all parts, 'Cornishmen preponderating, a hardy industrious population, whose peculiarities are not native to the soil.

All this time there has been little to remind us of Lancashire proper, unless perhaps the overseers' notices on the church

doors, from which may be gathered that all this district is known as the hundred of Lonsdale North of the sands—a cruel misnomer to anybody of a topographical mind—first, for what is Lonsdale but Lunesdale, or the valley of the Lune, and what have we dwellers between the Duddon and Leven ever had to do with any such faraway river as that?—unless in those remote times, if ever they existed, when this great bay of Morecambe was a grassy fertile plain with tributary rivers winding through and joining in one great estuary far away to the westward. There are stories all along these western coasts of some great sea-wall that shows its top now and then at low tides in the form of a reef of rocks, and that once enclosed a fertile country, long since drowned and desolated by the sea from the neglect of some wicked king. But all this must have happened, if it ever did happen, long before the Saxon hundred had come to be a local division in these parts. And we must cross once more the sands in search of the real and undoubted Lunesdale, with Luneceastre, or Lancaster, seated in its semi-regal state—the head of the county palatine, the chief stronghold of the once mighty Duchy of Lancaster.

TWO.

IN the bitter gloom of a winter's morn
A babe was born.

The snow piled high against wall and door,
On the mighty oak boughs the frost lay hoar;
But warmth and light shrined the happy face,
So softly pillowed mid down and lace.

The bells clashed out from the reeling spire,
The night was reddened by many a fire;
The cottage smiled for the joy at the hall,
As the poor man answered the rich man's call,
And his lot for a day was less forlorn,
Because a little child was born.

In the bitter gloom of a winter's morn,
A babe was born.

The snow piled high in the narrow street,
Trodden and stained by hurrying feet;
On the hearth the embers lay cold and dead,
And the woman who crouched on the damp straw
bed,

Muttered a curse, as the drunken sport,
Swelled up to her lair from the crowded court.
Riot without and squalor within,
To welcome a waif to a world of sin,
And a pitiful life was the more forlorn,
Because a little child was born.

In a smiling home amid sun and flowers,
A child grew up.

Calm, and beauty, and culture, and wealth,
To give power to life and grace to health;
Gentle influence, thought, and care,
To train the darling of love and prayer,
The stately heirlooms of place and blood,
To crown the flower of maidenhood,
With childhood's pearly innocence kept,
On the folded leaves where the sunshine slept.
So sweetly and richly foamed the cup
Life held, where the happy girl grew up.

Where "home" was a vague and empty word,
A child grew up;
Where oath and blow were the only law,
And ugly misery all she saw;
Where want and sin drew hand in hand,
Round the haunts that disgrace our Christian
land;

A loveless, hopeless, joyless life,
Of crime, and wretchedness, struggle and strife!
Never a glimpse of the sweet spring skies,
To soften the flash in the wild young eyes;
No drop of peace in the poisoned cup
Life held, where the reckless girl grew up.

On a summer eve as the slow sun set,
A woman died.
At the close of a long and tranquil life.
Honoured and guarded, mother and wife.
With gentle hands whose work was done,
And gentle head whose crown was won,
With children's children at her knee,
And friends who watched her reverently;
Knowing her memory would remain,
Treasured by grief, that scarce was pain,
With her heart's dearest at her side,
Blessing and blessed, the woman died.

On a summer eve as the slow sun set,
A woman died.
She had fought the failing fight so long!
But time was cruel, and hard, and strong.
Without a faith, without a prayer,
With none to aid, and none to care;
With not a trace upon the page,
From desperate youth, to loathsome age,
But sin and sorrow, wrong and chance,
And bitter blank of ignorance;
With not a hand to help or save,
With not a hope beyond the grave,
Tossed in the black stream's rushing tide,
Unmourned, unmissed, the woman died.

And, we all are akin, runs the kindly creed!
Ah, the riddle of life is hard to read!

THE BISHOP'S REPENTANCE.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

WHEN Richard Musgrave settled in what he was pleased to call his mind, that he would take orders in the Church of England, it was thought by his friends—by whom I mean the very few relations who took any interest in him—that he had better seek for a curacy in the diocese of Alchester. Alsetshire was a healthy, cheap county, and it so happened that the Bishop of Alchester had been an old college friend of his father's. When considerations of choice are equally balanced, some very slight reason is enough to make up a determination. What young Musgrave could have expected from Bishop Grant it was not very easy to see. Certainly Musgrave père and Dr. Grant had been very intimate in undergraduate days, and for some time longer. They had had rambles together, and many common acquaintances, and had for some years corresponded with considerable vigour. Then all this had gradually fallen off, as is so often the case in life. Grant got on in a wonderful way. He had been fortune's favourite from the

first. Musgrave got on a little way, and then became permanently stationary. He took a small living, and so was shunted off the main line. His friends had secured him a moderate benefice—no inconsiderable matter as things now go—and they did not feel called upon to do anything more for him or his family. On this benefice he had managed to give his son a good education, and had sent him to Cambridge.

We do not mean to represent our young clerical hero as being in any degree a remarkable person. He was not plucked, but on the other hand he took no honours. He passed quietly and reputably through Cambridge. The dons gave him a good word, and he was decidedly popular with the men of his year. It was his father's quiet, blameless career all over again. To be exactly like his father, he also resolved that he would enter the ministry of the Church of England. Why he should have done so was not at all clear, even to his own mind. He did not profess to have the strong inward call and persuasion which he knew was the case with some men. His father had been a clergyman, and why should he not be a clergyman himself? These things run very much in families. So he looked out for a tithe in the diocese of Alchester, and found one without much difficulty.

The career of Dr. Grant had been a remarkable one, but one that had not been unfrequently paralleled in the happy annals of Oxford and Cambridge. Poor scholars and sizars, by industry and ability have risen repeatedly to high honours in Church and State. Grant had been one of the poorest of poor scholars. It was reported of him that, to save the expense of candles, he had, in his freshman's term, wrapped his feet in straw, and had studied under the light of the staircase lamp. In those days Musgrave had been by far the better off of the two, and when the two young men agreed always to breakfast together, being on the same floor, the balance of comfort and luxury certainly lay with Musgrave. But a very short time sufficed to change all that. Whereas Musgrave took no honours at all, Grant was at the very head of the academical tree. He became fellow and tutor of his college, a canon of a cathedral with the best living in the gift of the chapter, and ultimately a bishop. The remarkable thing was that this man's whole nature expanded with the genial glow of prosperity. The poor scholar became famous for courtly manners as soon as he

was introduced into courtly society. He was always known as being a very hard-headed man of indomitable shrewdness, determination, and perseverance, and, for all his courtliness, there was a hand of iron beneath the velvet glove. The story was told of him, whether truly or untruly, that in his country parish he once found a dying man by the roadside. He gently and tenderly lifted him up and conveyed him to the other side of the road that he might die in another parish, and his own be saved expense. Indeed, it was a common saying among his friends that if he had gone to the Bar he would certainly have been Lord Chancellor. He was a comely-looking man, and his comeliness increased as he became older, so that his friends gave him the name of the "beauty of holiness." He had an extremely satisfactory bishopric, to use old Fuller's expression, "not with so high a rack as some of them, but with a deeper manger."

Musgrave had watched his friend's career with rejoicing and astonishment. When Grant had published his famous edition of the most corrupt play extant of Æschylus, when he had been made canon and professor, when he had attained to his bishopric, Mr. Musgrave had not failed to send him congratulatory epistles. Dr. Grant had answered all these, chattily and agreeably in the first instance, within rather limited dimensions in the second, and quite curtly in the third. Mr. Musgrave felt hurt. That old, sincere affection which he had for his ancient ally and college chum had apparently ceased to be reciprocated. He was a man of independent character, and resolved that any further correspondence must come from the bishop's side. With a feeling that was not envy, but was absolute wonder, he read his old companion's speeches in the House of Lords; and saw his name at the Queen's garden and concert parties, and at the festivities of the great; and taking his holidays in Italy and the South of France. He wished him well, but was afraid that the sunshine of life had hardened his whilom friend's heart. Despite his resolution that his should not be the hand to gather up the threads of a broken friendship, he did not oppose his son's intention to go into the diocese of Alchester, and so strong is the natural desire of a father's heart to do any good turn possible for a son, that he broke through his resolve of silence, and gave his son Tom Musgrave a letter of introduction to his old friend the bishop.

When Tom went to pay his respects to the great prelate—for the bishop required a personal interview with candidates before ordaining them—he was shown into the cold, big library; where portraits of old bishops looked down upon the goodly tomes which they had bequeathed to their see. He sent in both his card and his father's letter of introduction. After waiting for about a quarter of an hour, he was shown into a much smaller library of a much more genial description, where modern literature and even modern fiction had its place, and where Tom's cultured olfactory nerves detected traces of coffee and tobacco. The old clergyman, of very remarkable appearance, before whom Tom instinctively felt abashed, of great dignity, great acuteness, and most courtly manner, came kindly up to him, and clasped both his hands with effusion.

"Ah, Mr. Musgrave, how do you do?" said the blandest of bishops; "and how is your dear father?"

"He is very well, my lord, and he sends his best respects to your lordship."

"How kind of him; and he remembers me still after all these years. Oh, how very kind of him! It is forty years ago," went on the bishop with a voice of singular sweetness and calmness, "since we were undergraduates together at St. Ambrose. We lived on the same floor of the same staircase, and every morning, for many terms together, we had the same breakfast, and after hall we had the same tea. Your father never did justice to his great natural ability, or he might have done better than I have done. Everybody liked him, the simplest and kindest-hearted of men."

Tom's eyes glistened. There are few fathers and sons who loved each other better than Tom and his father.

"If you come into my diocese," said the bishop, affectionately laying his hand upon Tom's arm, "I shall think it my duty to be a friend and father to you, for your own sake and for your father's sake. But you will have to see and to satisfy my examining chaplain," added the bishop, not without a certain sharpness in his tone.

Tom thought it rather odd that the bishop, after all his kindness, did not ask him to lunch. There was a theory among some bishops in those days, which are now old days, that the Biblical injunction to bishops to be hospitable belonged to times in which there were no hotels or eating-

houses, and that consequently the injunction had become obsolete. At the present time most bishops are largely given to luncheons, and will receive their young friends all the time that their examinations are going on. This was not the state of things at Alchester in those days.

The bishop's palace was two and a half miles out of Alchester. It was justly considered by his lordship that a walk to and fro would be a healthy and improving exercise for young Levites. This was accordingly done by a considerable proportion of the candidates, but nervous young men, who could not spare the time from their books, took up their abode at a small public-house just outside the gardens of the bishop's palace. The public-house did not bear a good reputation, especially at the racing season, for the racecourse was close at hand, but the landlord always successfully maintained before the licensing magistrates that the public-house was a necessity for the bishop's young men.

In due time Tom found his way to the examining chaplain. Before doing so he greatly hurt the feelings of the butler by mistaking him for that functionary. The examining chaplain was a good and kindly man, himself destined to become a distinguished bishop. In the result, Tom passed very fairly, and received a kindly shake of the episcopal hand and a fractional one-twenty-third part of divers addresses delivered to him and twenty-two other candidates. Then Tom went down to his little curacy in a remote part of Alsetshire.

The parish of Danehill, to which he was licensed, consisted of a little village with one small street, which the people called "the town," and expanded several miles, both in length and breadth, with some scattered cottages in it. There was a station known by the name of Danehill Road Station, which seduced the unwary into the idea that it was close to Danehill, and ignored the fact that there was an unpleasant trudge of over six miles of clay road before Danehill proper could be reached. Danehill proper considered itself a right proper sort of place, for it boasted of The Montacute Arms, the name of the noble family, the head of which was the lord of the manor, and also of the Montacute crosses and monuments in the old parish church, which were full of interest to antiquarians. There was only one little house in the village that boasted furnished

apartments, and this had been occupied by a long succession of curates, and was known as the curate's lodge. Here abode a very motherly kind of person, widow of a parish clerk deceased, who did the more delicate laundry-work of the parish, and took special care of the curates, their morals and their belongings. There was very little society in the parish. The land, far and wide, belonged to the Montacutes, and the chief people were the tenant-farmers, who had large holdings under the great house.

But the vicarage made a great deal of amends. The vicar, John Maynard, was old and feeble now, and contented himself with giving the absolution to his flock and rehearsing to them the Ten Commandments. He had always been a reading and thinking man, and made himself very useful to Tom Musgrave in making him read and think much more than Tom had ever done at college. Likewise, he pointed out to the young deacon where he would find sermons short and sweet, suited to the capacity of his bucolic congregation. The stipend was not very much, and Tom Musgrave, junior, was very glad to receive from Tom Musgrave, senior, an occasional replenishment of his purse. But the greatest charm of all was in the vicar's daughter, Lucilla, the child of his old age, the very apple of the old man's eye, to whom, with touching simplicity and weakness, he looked for help and comfort in all things. The clergyman nearest at hand was a certain Mr. Dyke, who had been for years the curate of the next parish, the rector of which was a wealthy absentee. Lord Montacute would once or twice a year ride over from Montacute Castle to pay his respects, but the Reverend Dyke made it a point of conscience to come over on an average once a week to smoke a pipe with the rector and talk over old books and old college days.

What has the British curate got to do under such circumstances? He must fall in love with the rector's daughter. He is bound to do it. It is his natural destiny. It is what hosts of curates have done before, and what they are bound to do till the end of the chapter. And small blame indeed to Tom Musgrave for thus rushing upon the inevitable. He was thrown day by day into contact with a girl "as sweet as English air could make her," not so well accomplished, perhaps, as the sisters of some of the men whom he had known at the University, but with a more solid character, a more solid education,

and gifts and graces of her own, which were positively charming and bewildering. Moreover, the girl was so thoroughly good, so practical in everything that she took in hand, that Tom found himself taking great pains in looking after the bedridden old women of the parish, in taking a class in the schools, and in spelling out sermons of his own instead of merely copying those of other people, in order to win an approving smile from Lucilla. We are poor human creatures, and it often happens that the human love and the divine love become inextricably intermingled.

By-and-by, by a natural gradation of ideas, Tom began to think of marrying—Lucilla of course—soberly, discreetly, advisedly, and had strong hopes that the bishop, his own friend and his father's friend, would give him some preferment, after he had worked steadily in the diocese for some years, which would enable him to carry out this little idea. It was rather a trial, when he went up at the end of his first year in order to obtain full orders, that the bishop seemed to take hardly any notice of him, and relegated him entirely to the examining-chaplain. However, several lively political questions were astir about this time, and he concluded that the bishop was so immersed in public and political matters that it was not necessary to resort to the extreme hypothesis of intentional discourtesy to explain the actual neglect.

One day old Dyke walked over to have one of his long chats with the aged rector, and to take his homœopathic dose of whisky in the cold spring water for which the garden of Danehill Rectory was famous. It came sheer from the rocks, and on the hottest day of summer was as cool as if it had been moderately iced. Dyke had hardly missed coming each week for seven years, the eventful seven years which had turned Lucilla from a child into a woman. Dyke had given the lonely girl a good deal of a youth's education; had taught her chess and Euclid, and had even taught her to read Greek and Latin authors. He would not teach her to write Latin verses, because he justly considered that young ladies ought to have verses written to them, and not to write verses themselves. Likewise he had taught her to play on the organ, to play some old church music which he had picked up in foreign travel, and which hardly anyone else in England knew. To outsiders he seemed a reserved, monastic, silent man; but those

who knew him well knew how gentle and wise a man he was. Tom had been making all kinds of parish plans with Lucilla, while Dyke, with kindly and yet anxious eyes, silently watched the handsome young couple. Who can tell what curious, loving fancies during the few past years had been building themselves up in old Dyke's mind, and what terrible havoc the handsome young curate was making in them?

"I wish the old bishop would give me a living," said Tom Musgrave, as with longing eyes he watched Lucilla go down the stone steps that led from the drawing-room into the garden.

"I don't think you've got much chance, youngster, unless you could get such a man as Lord Montacute to put in a word for you."

"I am trying to do all I can," quoth poor Tom.

"I know you are, youngster, and it does you credit. It will go to your ledger account by-and-by; but there's no ledger that will take notice of it in this world. What does it matter to your bishop, or what does he know, whether you are going on copying your sermons or striking out something of your own—whether you visit your sick and poor, or smoke cigars and read French novels all day? Your bishop does not know, and probably does not care to know, anything about you. You leave him alone, and he'll leave you alone."

"Fortunately I have some personal knowledge of the bishop," said Tom.

"Really," answered Dyke; "and what is your hold on old Grant?"

"My father and he were intimate friends at college."

"And I suppose your father reminded him of it?"

"Yes. He thought it might be a help to me."

"And I suppose the bishop shook you warmly by the hand?"

"Just so."

"And talked to you about your father?"

"In the kindest way possible."

"And promised to be a father and a friend to you?"

"He did. Bless him!"

"And from that day to this he hasn't taken much notice of you. Has he?"

"I really can't say that he has. He has been so busy, you see."

"Exactly. Now, my young friend, I'll tell you something. I know Grant. He and I were at school together. I came here as curate-in-charge of Milderton, soon

after he came into Alsetshire, as bishop, and I had to see him about being licensed. We had been great friends at school, and there we parted, he for Cambridge, and I for Oxford. He greeted me with positive affection, and said he would be a brother to me."

"And did he?"

"That happened thirteen years ago, and from that day to this we have never exchanged a word, except formally at public meetings."

"Neither has he done so with my father, and I believe, from all I have heard, that my father was the greatest friend he ever had at college."

The old rector, by reason of his age and infirmities, had gone very early to rest. Old men and little children, he used to say, both required much repose, and should both keep early hours. Lucilla did the hostess charmingly, and dispensed her hospitality and attention with absolute impartiality.

The old curate and the young one walked away across the fields in the quiet summer evening.

"The fact is, I suppose," said the old curate with a cheerful twinkle in his eye, "that you want to marry Lucilla?"

"I do indeed," said the young man fervently.

"And I dare say Lucilla knows you want to marry her?"

"I certainly think that I have managed to convey that idea to her mind," said the young man with a happy, contented smile.

For a moment the face of the elder man flushed and grew pale; then he said quietly:

"Most people who have come to my time of life would exhort you not to split upon the rock of an early undowered marriage. That, however, is not my advice. When I hear of a marriage being an unhappy one, this is not generally on account of narrow means; it is through extravagance, or want of principle, or something of that sort. If you unexpectedly find in this lovely village a pearl of great price, one richer than all its kind, you will make the greatest possible mistake in throwing it away. Richer and better than any preferment, benefice, canonry, or bishopric, is the winning of such a priceless girl as my Lucilla. There is such a thing as an honest man marrying for love, doing his best, and God prospering and taking care of him."

It will be readily understood that this would be a very intelligible and grateful doctrine to the young curate. It is not a doctrine which anyone would venture to argue upon the principle of political economy; but then such principles invariably break down under such a combination of circumstances as the present.

"And I don't mind telling you, youngster," continued Mr. Dyke, "that if you had not come and put your oar in, I should most probably have fallen in love and possibly have married the young lady myself. It is not as if she were living in London, where there would be plenty of people about her, but in this remote neighbourhood she met hardly anyone except myself. And in my experience most marriages of an elder man with a young girl have not been unhappy. But no doubt young wives should have young husbands. That is common-sense, and the rule of the world, which no one ought to depart from without the gravest cause. I have been thinking that I should like to marry Lucilla, and I will marry her; that is to say, I will marry her to you."

And the Reverend Dyke really did this, the rector being only up to the mark of coming to the service, and giving the bride away. It added much to his comfort, and happiness, and length of days, that the young people should take up their abode with him at the rectory. Lucilla was one of those women of whom the saying is true, that it is a liberal education only to know her. She was an extraordinary girl, and she had the good sense to know that she had not married an extraordinary man. But she made the most of him, and pulled him up to a much higher level than he had ever been accustomed to. I don't mean to say that she went so far as the Rev. Mrs. Jones, and the Rev. Mrs. Robinson, who have been known to write their husband's sermons, and to do so very well. But she took care that Tom should both study his Bible and talk common-sense, and should not take up too much time in doing so. Indeed, the parish became quite a noted one, the young parson exactly suiting the tone and capacity of the rustics, he and his wife doing all they could to keep them straight in their conduct, finding them plenty of cheerful amusement, and getting their children to church and school.

Thus things went on very happily for six useful, fruitful years. A nursery had been set up and was somewhat thickly populated

for that period of time. Then the dire event, long foreseen and vaguely terrible in the distance, came to pass in the final illness and death of the good old rector. To him it was a euthanasia. At the last his mind wandered. All his children and children's children were gathered kneeling round his bed; he fancied he was in church once more, and lifting up his hands he gave them the benediction, and so passed gently away.

It is sad to think what a terrible rending of ties constantly goes on in England on the death of a clergyman. It is bad enough at the hall, but it is infinitely worse at the rectory. At the hall the heir succeeds, and all the old heirlooms are kept together, and the family name remains, and the family place is still the centre and resort of all the kith and kin. But when the rector dies, in about six weeks' time the desolate family yield up the place to perhaps total strangers, the income ceases from the very day of the demise, and all the old associations are torn away by the roots. It was precisely this which now threatened the Musgraves. In all probability they would soon have to turn out of house and home. The living was in the gift of the bishop, and Tom naturally wrote to the bishop to make application for it. But Tom now knew more of men and of human nature than when he first came into Alsetshire. He had altogether ceased to look upon the bishop as his patron, his father, and his friend. It was with very chilled expectations that he committed his letter to the village post-box, saying a sort of grace over it, that good success might attend his good endeavours for his wife and family.

SOME CITY SCHOOLS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

MERCHANT TAYLORS' boys I knew several of. I always envied them because, while I had to cast about for a college, doubtful whether to fix on Oxford or Cambridge, they had St. John's, Oxford, ready to their hand—scholarships leading to fellowships, as certain as anything human can be for a lad of moderate ability. It was a pleasant prospect; you may think it savoured of a job, but perhaps, after all, free-trade in education has not produced such wonderful results as were looked for from it. It has, to a great extent, resulted in the success of those whose fathers are rich enough to pay for the highest cram-

ming, and who, having been highly crammed when too young to bear it, often break down in body, if not in mind, under life's responsibilities. But in those days I thought nothing of jobs. I was sorry I hadn't been sent to Merchant Taylors' despite the gloomy lane in which the school was, and the early hours then still insisted on, and the tallow candles that the boys had to bring and stick in front of their desks, and which, in fogs, must have been a very sorry help. Of St. Paul's I chiefly remember the Apposition days, and our criticisms on some of the verses, and on the speeches generally. I don't believe St. Paul's was then a good school of morals; it was, I judge, worse even than ours; and Kynaston, the magnificent, who was said never to have looked over more than one set of exercises a quarter, was a very different man from our self-denying head, who would worry for hours over the relative value of half-a-dozen translations of a bit of Thucydides.

One thing only disgusted me with my own school—we had no history. Of course we meant to make it; but a boy likes backers, and it was in the Pauline's and the Merchant Taylors' men's favour that they had plenty of grand old names. The less reason, too, for my saying much about these world-famous schools. Being older, and therefore more famous, they are better known. The Charterhouse, for instance, one always connects with the names of Thackeray and Havelock. My school will have to be careful in not overlooking talent if it is to get such a bed-roll as those Carthusians can show. Crawshay, Lovelace, Dr. Isaac Barrow, Addison (who came there from Lichfield school), Steele, Wesley, Blackstone, Bishop Monck, Lord Ellenborough, Leech, Bishop Thirlwall, Grote, Lord Dalhousie, Bernal Osborne, besides the two above-named. A grand galaxy, though many of them (banker Grote especially) are not the sort of boys one expects in a "charity school." I am glad that, since the Charterhouse is moved to Godalming the Merchant Taylors' School has occupied the site of which Stow says: "Without the bar of West Smithfield lieth a large street or way called of the House of St. John there, and stretcheth towards Iseldon. Here in the inside of the street standeth Hick's Hall, on the right hand whereof stood the late dissolved monastery called The Charterhouse, founded by Sir Walter Manny, knight, a stranger born."

Sir Walter, during the Black Death, that awful visitation which forced the French and English to stand at gaze for nearly ten years, bought this "Spital croft;" and he and the Bishop of London, who had a plot there called "Noman's Land," buried between them over fifty thousand people. Manny (whom Froissart has made an old friend to most of us) was buried in the church of the monastery, which he had founded for twenty-four Carthusian monks.

Every schoolboy knows the noble stand the prior of the day, Haughton, and his monks made against Henry the Eighth. They all perished, two who escaped and joined the Pilgrimage of Grace, being afterwards hanged in chains. One of Princess Elizabeth's many resting-places was this Charterhouse. James the First kept his court there, and made eighty knights bachelors in a day. Thomas Sutton, a Lincolnshire man, who got his wealth by working coal, and was a great buyer of North-country manors, bought it for thirteen thousand pounds. Of him Hearne says: "He toyed and wrought as if he coveted all, and gave away as if he desired nothing." He was Master-General of the Ordnance in the North, and got half Stoke Newington with his wife, so no wonder that, in a bad year, "he fed the poor for thirty weeks with all the produce of his estates." But he did not win golden opinions from everybody. Rapacity and extreme meanness are charged against him, perhaps by some subordinate whose private gains he checked. He is the original of Ben Jonson's Volpone, that fox who used to get people to give him rare plants, fruit, etc., that they might be remembered in his will. Instead of this he left the chief of his money to charities; and the will held against all the efforts of his nephews and nieces to set it aside. The school-room which so many have read about in *The Newcomes* was the Howard's drawing-room.

Colet's "School of the Child Jesus" dates further back. Its founder, friend of More and Erasmus, was one of the chief of the English Humanists, son of Sir H. Colet who was twice Lord Mayor. A French name, pointing to possible kinship with a canon of Rumilly in Champagne. He was the eldest of twenty-two children, of whom he alone grew up. His mother outlived him, and Erasmus says of her, "in her ninetieth year she looked so smooth and was so cheerful, you would

think she never shed a tear, nor brought a child into the world."

Colet was of St. Anthony's parish, and probably of that school, of which, says Stow: "The scholars of Paul's meeting with those of St. Anthony's, would call them St. Anthony's pigs, and they again would call the others St. Paul's pigeons. These, mindful of the former usage of disputations, did, for a long season, disorderly in the street, provoke one another with *salve tu placet tibi mecum disputare*, and so proceeding to questions in grammar, they usually fell from words to blows, with their satchels full of books, many times in great heaps, that they troubled the streets and passengers, so that finally they were restrained with the decay of St. Anthony's School." At St. Anthony's School, Colet used to get all the prizes; then going into Italy he met Grocyne, the restorer of Greek at Oxford, and also Linacre. In his absence he was made prebendary of York; and, returning, was prosecuted for heresy by Dr. FitzJames, Bishop of London, "and would have been burnt" (says Latimer) "had not God turned the king's heart to the contrary." "His school," says Erasmus, who helped him in framing laws, "he entrusted not to prince or bishop, or dean and chapter, but to married laymen; there being no certainty in anything human, but less corruption in such a body of citizens than in any other order or degree of mankind." He, and Lily, and Erasmus wrote the Paul's Accidence; Lily, who after leaving Oxford had gone a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and on his way back stayed in Rhodes, where many learned Greeks had settled after the taking of Constantinople. Colet's rule was to admit "not all boys of course, but according to their parts and capacities." The master, who, "if such could be got, was to be a wedded man," was to have a mark a week, and a gown of four nobles a year; the sub-master six-and-eightpence a year, and a gown of like value. The boys were to bring in winter not tallow candles but wax, at the cost of their parents; a much better arrangement than that which prevailed at Merchant Taylors' when I was a boy, where each boy brought his "dip," and the grease spilt on clothes, and books, and desks may easily be imagined. His appointing that the boys should go to Childermas and each give a penny to the boy bishop (for whom a sermon still extant was written by him or by Erasmus), shows that "he

yearned after the fair humanities of the old religion." But for all that he had no idea of keeping up abuses because they were old. Bartlemy Fair did not please him. He would have "no cockfighting, no riding about of victory nor disputings of St. Bartholomew, which are but foolish babbling." Yet, in spite of his prohibition, long after his day, on the eve of the saint, the Lord Mayor and aldermen "rode through the fair and heard the disputations between St. Paul's, St. Anthony's, and Christ's Hospital; the first prize being a silver pen gilt, five shillings, and to the master six-and-eightpence; the second, a pen of four shillings, and to the master five shillings; the third, a pen of three shillings, and to the master four shillings. The judges to be two masters of arts, each of whom to get a silver rule worth six shillings and eightpence. And then into the great hall of Christ's Hospital"—not, of course, that which is now really one of our finest bits of modern Gothic—"to have fruit and wine." In his school he made four divisions—the porch, in which the chaplain taught (the boys were obliged to know reading and writing before they came), the second-master's room, the head-master's, the chapel. Each desk had sixteen boys, with a little seat for the "dux"—the spaces, I hope, not quite so narrow as those in the new City School. Over the head-master's chair was an image of the Boy Jesus, and of God the Father, and besides the motto, "Doce disce aut discede," found in other old schools, two lines by Erasmus:

*Discite me primum pueri atque effingite puris.
Moribus; inde pias addite literulas.*

Pepys was a Pauline, and mentions his old school in his diary. "In the Lord Admiral's coach to Mercers' Hall, January 22, 1661. It pleased me much to come in this condition to this place where I was once a petitioner for my exhibition in St. Paul's School." The February after he goes "to Paules Schoole, it being Apposition day there. I heard some of their speeches, and they were just as schoolboys' used to be of the seven liberal sciences, but I think not so good as ours were in our time. Back again to Paul's Schoole, and went up to see the head forms posed in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; but I think they do not answer in any so well as we did, only in geography they did pretty well." Then he goes to the Mercers and has a noble dinner, and hears much praise of himself for having given the school his *Stephanus* in four volumes.

There was a talk of removal even in Pepys's day, just after the fire. At a dinner he records, "did talk of Paul's School, which they tell me must be taken away; and then I fear that it will be long before another place, such as they say is promised, is found; but they do say that the honour of their company is concerned in the doing of it."

Other Paulines were Sir Anthony Denny, Sir Edward North, and Sir W. Paget (City firms in those days, as has been noted by those curious in Whittington's ancestry, used to be recruited out of gentle and even noble families). Another was Leland, made "king's antiquary," in 1553, and sent on his itinerary "to peruse the libraries of cathedrals and other religious houses." He went mad with the toil, but I suppose he saved a good deal from that awful wreck, when, as we read in the case of Oxford, the king's commissioners threw the contents of the college libraries out into the quadrangles, and those that foreign merchants did not carry off were cut up to fledge arrows with. And yet it was the fashion till the other day to exclaim against the ignorance of "the fat monks," the evidence of whose learning had been so industriously destroyed.

Camden, historian, topographer, and maker of what is the basis of the old Eton Greek Grammar, was another Pauline; and Milton, and Nelson, and Calamy, and Cumberland, and the great Duke of Marlborough, and Halley, and poor Major André, and Sir Philip Francis ("Junius," almost everybody says), and Bishop Prince Lee, and Professor Jowett, each name calling up a history.

Colet died of the sweating sickness, which seems to have been a severe kind of influenza. He recovered for a while, and then went into the Charterhouse, at Sheen, to die. Naturally he was buried in St. Paul's, and Lilly's inscription on his monument begins.

*Inclyte Joannes Londinae gloria gentis,
Is tibi qui quondam Paule Decanus erat,
Qui toties magno resonabat pectore Christum,
Doctor et interpres fidus Evangelii.*

Dean Colet's school had a poor relation whose fortunes were sadly different from its own.

One of those reformers who came before their time was Mrs. Maria Hackett, of Crosby Square, who in 1811 took up the cause of the children of this real St. Paul's School. She remarks, speaking of the state of neglect into which the school had been allowed to fall, "parity of name rendered the injury

the more difficult of detection, since any observations relating to St. Paul's School have been referred to that of the Child Jesus." Mrs. Hackett found the old trifling salary still paid to the boys; the almoner ought to have been their music-master, but he handed them over to a deputy who eked out his salary by hiring them out to concerts. Her little book, *Correspondence and Evidence Respecting the Ancient Collegiate School Attached to St. Paul's Cathedral*, exposes one of those malversations of which at that time almost all our cathedrals afforded an instance. It is comparatively lately that Rochester was made to do its duty in this respect, thanks to the energy and determination of the grammar-school master.

Mrs. Hackett wrote to the bishop, pointing out that both the chancellor and almoner were bound to look after and to teach the children of a once famous school, where Ingulphus, Edward the Confessor's courtier, got his learning, and which successive bishops endowed with ample tithes. The boys were running about the neighbouring streets all day, so as to be at hand when the services began. Dean Colet's school would have none of them, because, urged the Mercers' Company, their own school is richly endowed. She cites the case of "a boy of sixteen, who had been in what professes to be a music school since he was nine, and cannot play a bar, has not even been taught his notes, and has now to seek both education and business." A little pet of hers, for whose sake apparently she made a female Quixote of herself, was always getting into trouble because, being determined to learn something of music, he found the times so ill-arranged that he was always late for service.

The bishop with freezing politeness refers her to the dean, who was also Bishop of Lincoln; and so there was a long delay while he was away at his see. She employed the interval in writing to Dr. Wellesley and Dr. Hughes, and to Dr. Richardson, "the junior cardinal." This latter worthy she speedily convicted of something very like prevarication. He pleaded poverty. He only got sixty pounds a year from the cathedral, most of which was spent on journeys to and fro; for his slender income obliged him to live down at his country rectory. "True," says she, "your nominal income is small, but you say nothing of your share of the reserved rents, fines, and other gains which raise it to almost five times its nominal value." She did

not make much way, poor lady. The dean refused point-blank to let her into the muniment-room, where she wanted to verify some of the deeds of gift where-with the school had been enriched. Yet for seventeen years she was indefatigably at work, helping on the reform which, by-and-by, the Charity Commissioners took up. Indeed, we may say that but for voices like hers, and the honest efforts of a very few dignitaries, among whom Copleston was the chief, nothing would have been done. She was a strong Churchwoman. Her feeling was that "by proper schools Dissenters might be won over," and what grieved her so sorely is that "schools which were under the special charge of priests and prelates, should have got into such a disgraceful state."

This school, too, had a famous past. It was older than Alfred, though its grammar master's endowment was the gift of Richard of Belmeis and Richard FitzNigel in the twelfth century. Ingulphus, as I said, was there. FitzStephen names it as one of the "*tres principales ecclesiæ scholæ*" in London. St. Anthony's was another; which was the third? Various bishops gave it a meadow at Fulham, and tithes of Ilings, and Madeley, and Horsett, and ordered that the almoner (this above all excited Mrs. Hackett's ire) should be "*non solum grammatices sed virtutis magister*."

Of Merchant Taylors' there is less to say. It also has its famous names—of bishops a whole army: Juxon; Andrews the witty, who met King Charles's cap-tious question with: "Your majesty may freely take my brother Neale of Durham's money, for he says it is yours"—Sherard, the Oxford Botany Professor; Neale, historian of the Puritans; Latham, natural historian of birds; Lord Clive; Charles Mathews and his son; Charles Young, the tragedian; Sir H. Ellis, and Dr. Birch, the Orientalist, both of the British Museum; and Albert Smith, of the Ascent of Mont Blanc.

Like Dean Colet's school, it too was a fruit of the renaissance. Sir Thomas White, who also founded St. John's, Oxford, bought, in 1560, the manor of the Rose, on which was the house built by Sir John Pulteney, five times Lord Mayor, and inhabited by Edward de la Pole, and others of his line. Hence the names of Suffolk Lane, Duck's-foot Lane (the duke's footway to his house), Green Lettuce (Lattice) Lane. In Shakespeare's *Henry the Eighth*, Buckingham's surveyor speaks

of this house. White arranged that two of the fellows of his college should yearly examine his school; but in 1572 we find them complaining that they were too poor to travel up, wherefore the company paid their charges, and they and Horne, Bishop of Winchester, and Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's (writer of the well-known Latin Catechism), met the schoolmaster, and the warden and assistants, and examined in the chapel, Nowell putting them on in Horace, "the boys making orations and presenting about a quire of paper in written verses."

The first head-master was Mulcaster, a good scholar, of whom Fuller says: "In the morning he would exactly and plainly construe and parse the lesson to his scholars; which done, he slept his hour (custom made him critical to proportion it), but woe to the scholar that slept the while. Awaking, he heard them accurately, and Atropos might be persuaded to pity as soon as he to pardon where he found just fault. The prayers of cockering mothers prevailed with him just as much as the requests of indulgent fathers, rather increasing than mitigating his severity on their offending children."

His boys were great in plays, as the Paulines were in speeches, whenever any royal personage came to the City. He was an Eton man, who migrated from King's, Cambridge, to Christ Church, Oxford. Besides plays, he was, like Ascham, fond of archery. His plays were popular. For instance: "In 1574, on Candlemas Night, Timoclia at the Siege of Thebes was performed by Mulcaster's children at Hampton Court, and the same year they played Perseus and Anthomeris on Shrove Tuesday," and a few years after, the Master of the Revels charges for a Shrovetide play by the same children called *A Historie of Ariodante and Genucora*.

The Brownists were very angry at these performances, which often took place on Sunday, and they finally put an end to the custom of allowing boys to play interludes.

The Merchant Taylors' Company seem to have been bad paymasters. The trouble with the St. John's fellows about coming up to examine grew chronic, and Mulcaster "resigned, being poorly paid, and went to Paul's." He is notable for standing out against taxation, from which, in old time, schoolmasters were free; and one is glad to hear of his retiring to the living of Cranbrook, and then to that of Stanford Rivers.

I should like to say something about Christ's Hospital, the old Grey Friars' School, re-founded by Edward the Sixth with a part of the property his father had plundered from the friary. So it was with all Edward's schools. At Bath, for instance, there had been a famous abbey-school, which, of course, came to an end when the monks were rooted out. By-and-by, on petition of certain influential men, the king was pleased to grant back a fraction of the abbey lands for the support of what was henceforth called King Edward's Royal Grammar School—an easy way of setting up places of education. The men who moved Edward to found the Bluecoat School, and also Bartholomew's Hospital—who knows the curious old priory church of Great St. Bartholomew, with Prior Rahere's tomb?—were Ridley and Sir R. Dobbs, the Lord Mayor, and Sir G. Barnes. To Cecil, Ridley wrote: "I must be a suitor to you in our Master Christ's cause. I beseech you be good unto Him. He hath been too long abroad without lodging in the streets of London, both hungry, and naked, and cold. Now, thanks be unto Almighty God, the city are willing to refresh Him, but they lack lodging." And so he goes on to plead for the sick and the erring, and the gutter-children, the old support of all of whom had been eaten up by rapacious courtiers representing themselves as zealous reformers of religion. He points out how certain places—Bridewell, St. Thomas's, Grey Friars—stand desolate, and may readily be turned to pious uses. The Mayor backs up his appeal, and his thanks are hearty: "Oh, Dobbs, Dobbs, alderman and knight, thou in thy yeare didst win my heart for ever more, for that honourable act, that most blessed work of God, of the creation and setting-up of Christ's holy hospitals and truly religious houses." In this world it so constantly happens that the wrong man gets the praise, that one is not astonished to find the head of Edward the Sixth instead of that of Dobbs on the Bluecoat-boys' buttons. Among famous "Blues" I can mention W. Campion, the Jesuit, John Vicars, Jeremiah Markland, the antiquary, Stillingfleet (says Pepys), Bishop Middleton, of Calcutta, and that other Calcutta luminary, Sir H. S. Maine, whose book on Early Law ought to have made the Irish contented, for it proves them to be true Aryans by showing that that old Breton code of theirs, which James the First's lawyers so contemptuously flung

aside, is full of striking resemblances to the boasted common law of England. Then, of course, there is the galaxy of which Lamb gives such a delightful record in those Essays of Elia which tell us all about Christ's Hospital as it was—himself, Coleridge, Le Grice, etc. I hardly know what to say about the dress. I am glad we did not wear it; and yet, almost all England over, it is a title to respect. I heard of a Blue who nearly came to grief in France in the first days of Louis Philippe. The dress was so mediæval that whispers of "Le petit Jésuit!" began to pass around. But in England I never knew but one man who had the heart to make a Bluecoat-boy—or rather, his father—uncomfortable by saying "he'd brought all his children up without public help, thank God!" The said man had a pilchard-fishery, and was called "Count-fin," from the sharpness with which he looked after each individual fish. Moreover, among several hard mine-managers he was known for the hardest. What a safeguard to elder boys the garb must be in a city I need not point out.

I must say that, whatever be the cause, Christ's Hospital has, for its numbers, had fewer great men than any of our great schools. I have looked through the list of exhibitioners; of most of them it is merely recorded that they went to Cambridge or Oxford as the case might be. The only others I need mention are Scholefield, the Cambridge Greek Professor, and Haig-Brown, whom the Bluecoat School has given as a head-master to the Carthusians. I trust that when my school is three centuries and more old it will have something far nobler to show than the school of Dobbs and Ridley can point to.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III.

CHAPTER XIV. JAKE'S SILVER WATCH AND CHAIN.

HESTER DEVENANT slept quietly now by the side of him she had in life so loved, and in death so passionately yet faultily mourned.

The White House was closed, and the grim goblin on the stairs, that the boy Ralph had touched tenderly night by night as he passed it by, had only its fellows to gibe and grin at; and even that in the weird, uncanny gloom born of shuttered windows and closed doors.

To the outer world it seemed as though a strange drama was played out, the actors gone, the lights turned down, the stage deserted. Only those behind the scenes knew that the play was only just begun, the stage only shifted, the most delicate and intricate part of the plot still to be carried out.

Becklington did not hear with much surprise that Hester Devenant had died "unlike most," since she had lived in the same fashion.

"It wur folly to look for her to do owt same as other folk," said Jake, wisely shaking his head over a lifetime's persistent eccentricity. "Ony one of us can mak' a nat'ral endin' i' our beds wi' doctor and parson, each after his kind, and weepin' relatives around; but it's not to be looked for in a woman like Gabriel's widow that she should dee loike t' ruck on us."

"It was like that!" said Dr. Turtle, the individual to whom these animadversions were addressed, and he flipped his fingers smartly in the air. "Like that!"

"Lord save us!" ejaculated Jake, a prey to the same emotion as that which would have caused a Catholic to cross himself in hot haste. Then he leant his arms on the boot he was mending, and looked gravely and intently at the doctor over his horn-rimmed spectacles. "Weel, weel," he said, "hoo's at rest, doctor, and that's more than ony man could say of her while she lived, or of them as lived anigh her," he added, not without a twinkle in his little bright eyes either. "I tell you what it is: her worritin' ways had a seet more to say to Gabriel's sorry ending than had the bank robbery; and as to Miss Hilda—bless her sweet face!—it's mony a time I've thought things wur sadder than should be for one so young."

"Please Heaven the sadness will die out of it now, Jake."

"Ay, ay," nodded the cobbler, preparing to resume his work; "when she's Maister Ralph's wedded wife she'll happen learn to smile a bit oftener—the fault wanna be hisen if she doan't; but he's had a sight o' sorrer hissen has Maister Ralph, and needs cheerin' as much as she do, for his 'art wur fair broke by t' squoire's death, and he carries a mony more years on his yed than belongs theer by reet—that do he! Ay, doctor, but it's a rum go, too, as mak's Hester Devenant's choilt mistress o' the Dale. Whoy, I moind when she used to go ooptheerto see Miss Alice and t'ould squoire, and tak' her dish o' tea i' the housekeeper's—"

room, and be larned to play the harpsichord by that same dear lady, and it wur thout a foine thing for her to be so privileged above her fellows—that it wur. Yet I reckon the gentry 'ull tak to her like a duck to wayter, as t' sayin' goes—and well may they, or ony sich, fer she's a fair flower to be set i' ony mon's bress, be he who he may. She got a tidy scare, though, I reckon, doctor, when the mother turned the corner so mighty sharp, wi' never a good-bye, nor a squeeze o' t' hond, nor nowt as the lass moight how'd on to afterwards. The maid as wur t' fust to reach her, said it would ha' gone hard wi' anyone to say which face wur whitest—the dead mother or the living choilt—and the last wailin' fit to break the heart in a chap's body to hear her."

"Jake, Jake," said the doctor, blowing his nose violently, "men in my profession see strange sights and sad ones; they need strong nerves—nerves of iron, the courage of a soldier; but thank God, Miss Hilda has good friends to stand by her in the day of tribulation. She is well cared for, Jake, by our good vicar and his wife."

"Which on us, as comes in ony trouble, isna—if you come to that?" said Jake. "Wi' the loike o' you to fettle broken legs, and the loike o' him and her to bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort them as is heavy-laden, Becklington's well done by i' the matter o' mendin'—temp'ral and spiritoo'al, say I!"

"While in the matter of boot-mending, it might do worse than little Jake the cobbler—eh, man?" said Dr. Turtle, taking an airy pinch, and pleased with his own readiness.

"Maybe, doctor, maybe; but my trade isna what it wur. There's new fangled notions about—there's a frowardness in heels and toes as no modest female should connive at; but fal-lals o' that mak' ketches the female fancy, and so it comes about that a sight o' folk go to York, or some such scarlet Babylon, to buy their Sunday best; but for honest workaday boots they still come to little Jake, so happen it's broad as it's long."

"Still, you are a prosperous man, Jake, or you couldn't treat yourself to such fal-lals as a new silver watch-chain, such as I see glistening under the fob of your apron now and again?"

"Ay, but yo've sharp eyes, doctor—sharp eyes of your own," said Jake, slipping his head out of the leather loop that held up the bib of his apron, and drawing

from his pocket a handsome silver watch. "T' seal nowt but t' tail-end o' the matter. Look ye, there—there's a beauty for ye!" and he held up the watch in the sunlight.

"Bless us all!" said Dr. Turtle; "why, Jake, you're quite a dandy!"

"It looks loike it, do'ant it?" replied Jake with a grin. "But it's others as has druv me to 't. I hanna took to 't nat'ral. I'll tell yo how this here glorification come about. 'Twas this way. Here I set—last Friday it wur a week—thinkin' of nothin' at all but my wark, an' tryin' to puzzle out an awk'ard turn o' a toon we're after larnin' at t' chapel. Weel, all in a minute there cooms a sailor-chap, as brings hissen to anchor just wheer yo're a standin' now. 'Well,' says he, 'and how do yo' find yoursen, my man?' 'Yo're mighty pleasant,' says I, lookin' up at 'im; 'I find mysen partic'lar comfortable,' says I. 'I'm glad of that,' says he, and then he whistled a bit, same as yore seafarin' chap allers does when he's a goin' to foot-it-merry i' the hornpipe line. 'Is yore name Jake?' says he. 'It is,' says I; 'have yo' owt to say agen it?' 'Not I,' says he; 'it's like old music to me;' and wi' that he smoilt all over his face till he looked like t' risin' sun atop o' Mrs. Callender's clock. 'Why, Jake,' says he, 'han' yo clean forgot me?' and at that word, and t' look as come along wi' 't, down went last and boot clatterin' atop o' one another, and 'I'm domed,' shouts I, 'if it b'eant little Patch!'"

"Not the widow's son?" said Dr. Turtle, all amazement. "It was never the poor widow's son, Jake?"

"It were no'but he; and in he coom, and down he set; and such a tale he had to tell! Why, 'twur for all t'world like a story-book."

"Jake, I am right glad your kindness to that poor woman and her little ones has had its reward, even 'after many days.'"

Jake knew that the good old doctor spoke thus, not of that gorgeous gift, the silver watch and chain, but of the grateful memory of which it was the sign and signal.

"Aye, aye," he said, wagging his grizzled head; "I wur reetly glad i' my heart as they hadna forgot the little cobbler."

"But what was the story Patch had to tell?" continued Dr. Turtle.

"Weel—she'd cheered up had that po'r widow-woman—tuk to less whimpering ways, I reckon, and tidied hersen up some. Ony way, i' the end, she wed wi' an

honest mon as faythered the dead mon's childer same as if they wur his own. He did well by 'em, I warrant yo', and Patch wur giv' a power o' schoolin', but he'd a rovin' nature in 'im, so he set his moind on goin' to sea; and what does that honest chap do but 'prentice 'im i' the marchant service. Weel, sir, when Patch come whoam from his third long voyage, it wur to find hissen an inheritor."

"A what?" quoth the doctor, puzzled, and stimulating his brain with a pinch.

"An inheritor—that is to say, an heir," explained Jake. "The chap as robbed Stirling's bank—be who he moight and where he moight—had taken a fit o' soft-heartedness, that had he."

Dr. Turtle drew suddenly nearer to the speaker. It almost seemed as though his venerable cheek had lost a shade of its naturally healthy colour. The doctor was as rosy as an apple that time has shrivelled yet not robbed of its ruddy glory. Time, in truth, seemed to have ripened rather than aged Dr. Turtle. His form was as slender and upright, his manner as debonair as ever.

But now, as Jake's last words fell upon his ear, he seemed all at once to shrink together; to gather himself up closely; to lose his wonted air of happy interest in the history of Widow Bunycastle and her family.

"May I step into that cosy parlour of yours," he said, "and warm my fingers at the blaze? They are a bit benumbed, for the first autumn winds strike chill, and my blood is old, Jake, old, and lacks the fire it once had."

Not a little surprised at such an unlooked-for claim upon his hospitality, laying the honour done him somewhat at the door of the new watch and chain; and fervently hoping that a neighbour or two might see his guest ushered through the shop to the "cosy parlour" behind, Jake hastened to open the half-door with its jingling bell (jingling it more than was needful in order to attract the notice of any chance passer-by). Dr. Turtle, stepping gingerly among boots, and shoes, and fragments of leather and tools, made his way to the small, exquisitely neat room that looked into a tiny courtyard all ablaze with scarlet-runners and a monster sunflower or two.

Jake whisked off his apron, and hung it on a peg behind the door. It was all very well to sit at his work and in his working attire when folks stopped for a chat out-

side, but when quality saw fit to make themselves at home in the parlour, more pomp and ceremony was called for.

"Yes," said the doctor contentedly, "this is a vast improvement, Jake."

He drew up a wooden chair—whose legs squeaked horribly on the flagged floor in the process—close beside the fire, and set-to warming his hands.

"And how goes on the new partner—eh?" he said presently.

"Which it's Abel you're drivin' at, doctor? Weel, weel, he does his best, and which on us con do more? He's a long lanky chap, as was never made for to sit compact and comfortable on a cobbler's bench; but he tucks his legs away best as he can, and mak's t' best on himsen, and when I'm gone he'll be ready to step into my shoes, as the sayin' goes, which for 'im means mendin' other people's. He bean't over bright i' t' yed, bean't Abel, but he's main good to his blind old mother, so I dinna grudge givin' him a lift—not I. It bean't every mon as is built for his trade," continued Jake with a furtive glance of complacency at his own spindles; "but it's a mighty foine thing, doctor, when t' legs is fitted for t' burden as well as t' back—as the sayin' goes."

The sudden agitation which had shaken Dr. Turtle seemed now to have passed.

He cleared his throat, and reverted to the subject of the wonderful story which had been told by the donor of the silver watch, for such he had conjectured Patch to be.

"So the boy Patch found himself an inheritor, did he?"

"Aye, and to some tune," said Jake, taking up his dropped parable with avidity, and sitting on the extreme edge of his chair, as a tribute to the quality of his guest; "for, as I wur saying when yo' wur took wi' the chills, the chap as robbed Stirling's Bank sent back every penny of the widow's mite—which I use as a figger, sir—meanin' all as wur stole from Mistress Bunycastle, 'even to the uttermost farthin',' as the book hath it——"

"How was it sent?" put in the doctor, speaking as though he were a little short of breath.

"Secretly—done up to look like nothin' in per'tickler," answered Jake, leaning across a small deal-table that stood between host and guest, and opening his eyes alarmingly wide; "it wur done that crafty-like as nothin' wur never known like it, and wheer it came from the Lord knows, and none else, I reckon!"

"How did the—person who sent it, know where Mrs. Bunycastle was to be found?" said the doctor, rubbing one hand thoughtfully over the other, and looking at the fire.

"That's the puzzlement of it, doctor!" cried Jake, going near to upset the table in his excitement; "but come it did, by post too, from Lunnun; but, deary me, Lunnun's a big place to look fer a sma' thing in, wi' ony hopes o' findin' it. But there's more o' this story to come yet, sir—not about the 'heritance as Patch 'herited, but about a strange kind o' chance as befell him in that there voyage I spoke of. Happen, however, I'd best finish about the 'heritance first. Well, sir, that man as had married the widow and faythered her childer, he just took that money, and parted it out to each choilt a part. He'd more than enoo' himsen, said he, for him and t' missus, and t' money wur earnt by him as wur dead and gone, so that wur t' best way to deal by 't. Then him, and her, and t' lads got agate spakin' o' that dratted old miller, wi' a heart as hard as 'is own grindstone, and——"

"Of all you did, my generous friend, to help the widow and the fatherless?" put in the doctor.

"Weel, happen they did call little Jake to mind—in truth I reckon they must ha' said summat, for Patch, he cried out: 'Blest if I don't buy a silver watch as big as a turmit, and take it along to Jake the cobbler!' at which, says the man as faythered him: 'Yo' conna do a better thing.' So yo' see, doctor, part o' the 'heritance come to me, as yo' may say, and sin' the day Patch brought it, and the town knew I'd got it, there's not a boy i' Becklington but what's come grinnin' to my window to ax me the time o' day, just to get a glint o' Jake's gran' watch."

"Naturally—of course they have," said Dr. Turtle; "but come, Jake, tell me what other marvels have you to relate? Time flies, and I must fly with it."

"I've this to relate," said Jake, revelling in his position as the teller of strange news, and mouthing his words slowly to prolong the pleasure of hearing himself speak. "I've this to tell: the last voyage but one as ever Patch took, who should be aboard the vessel as he served in—but——Tak' a guess at it now, doctor?"

"Master Ralph," said the doctor, and leaned back in his chair, with his hand over his eyes.

"None other," said Jake. "Him and the poor gentleman as were drowned dead i' the very next voyage ever they went on. Weel, Master Ralph, when he found from the captain as a lad aboard had lived i' Becklington, and been i' Becklington toime o' the bank robbery, he had him into his cabin, and Patch made free to tell him all about the other young 'uns at home, and Maister Ralph, Lord bless him! were as gentle as gentle, and seemed to love to hear it all. He shook hands wi' Patch, and 'My lad,' says he, 'I'm right glad that all has gone so well wi' you and yours, and there's yet another as 'ull be glad at heart too,' says he, 'for I'll write to my dear father,' says he, 'as soon as I set my foot on land, and tell him all the story.' Why, Lord ha' mercy! do yo' be cold still, doctor?" said Jake, interrupting his narrative suddenly, and staring hard at his guest; "I'm varry feared yo've took a proper chill; yo're as white as milk, an' shakin' loika. Yo'd best gang whoam, sir, and tak' a hot posset afore yo' go to bed."

"Yes," said the doctor, "your advice is good—you ought to belong to our profession; you'd be an ornament to it, Jake—an ornament to it. Good-day to you, good-day—good-day!"

Left alone, Jake scratched his head, staring blankly at the old matchlock above the mantel.

"If I didn't know as he was a sober-minded gentleman, I should be fancying he'd stay'd too long at Widow Green's on his way here. My sakes! I hope he ain't sickenin' for a fever of the brain. Becklington could ill spare Dr. Turtle. Happen he were a bit shook over the sad end as Mistress Hester made; he's as tender-hearted as a chicken, is the doctor, though he do talk so mighty big about nerves and such-like."

Next Week will be commenced a New Serial Story, entitled,

J E N I F E R.

BY MRS. PENDER-CUDLIP (ANNIE THOMAS),

Author of "A Narrow Escape," "No Alternative," etc., etc.

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THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER CUDLIP).

CHAPTER I. HOW JENIFER MARKETING.

"ORDER the pony-trap at once, Jenifer, and drive in to Exeter as fast as you can. It is really providential that I got that card from Tammy last night, telling me about the teal and widgeon; teal is what your brother prefers, I know, but if the teal are all gone—"

"If there's a doubt about any being left, don't you think I may as well give myself the benefit of the doubt, mother, and stay for tennis this afternoon?"

"My dear Jenifer, what are you thinking about? With all I have on my head between now and to-night, is it likely that I shall overweight myself with the 'last straw,' which tennis would be?" Mrs. Ray asked, with a manner that, had it been silk, might be described as amusement shot with vexation. "Your brother—your eldest brother—is bringing home his bride, and I have only six hours wherein to prepare a fitting reception for her."

"I don't think my eldest brother deserves to have so much consideration shown to him, as we never knew that he had a bride, or thought of having one, till his telegram came half an hour ago," Jenifer said coldly.

"Ah, my dear, perhaps not; but if you had a son you would most likely be as lenient to his lapses towards you as I am to Hubert's towards me. I am his mother, and if the thought of his wife has put me out of his mind for a time, why, all I can do is to love her the more for having won so much love from my son, for to have won so much she must have given largely."

"And if I could ever forget for a moment (which I can't) that you are the sweetest

and wisest mother in the world, I'd tell you you were talking stuff and nonsense now," Jenifer said heartily. "As it is I'll only tell you that the teal shall be offered up to Hubert to-night, if any are to be got in Exeter."

"And after all," her mother said coaxingly, "it is getting a little late for tennis; the courts are quite damp and slippery. You know how you dislike damp and slippery courts, Jenifer; and it's just possible that our friends may not come at all. Julia Mills said yesterday that we were not to count upon their party, as she fancied she felt a cold coming."

"Julia only said that because she wasn't sure at the moment that Mr. Hunsdon had either been asked or was coming. Her cold cleared off directly I told her we were sure of him."

"Then the Worthleys said they couldn't be here till late!"

"They always say that, and end by coming before everybody else. Valuable as the Worthleys' time is, they always contrive to be in with the fiddlers and out with the lights."

Mrs. Ray laughed and patted her daughter's shoulder.

"What makes you a little acid to-day, Jenifer?"

"Hubert's telegram, I think, mother. It does seem so hard—so hard," the girl continued with tears in her eyes, "that after being so much to Hubert all his life, we should suddenly come down to being treated like any hotel-keeper, to whom he would telegram for a room and a dinner."

"You did order the pony, didn't you, dear?" her mother asked, discreetly disregarding this outburst.

"Yes; Nettle's ready by this time, and so am I, mother, really—quite ready, and willing too," Jenifer answered, kissing her

mother as she spoke. "Make out your list while I'm putting on my hat, and I'll be down in five minutes."

Mrs. Ray's list was not quite ready when Jenifer, armed for her drive with whip, gauntlets, and waterproof, reappeared. Many other things besides teal and widgeon had suddenly become essential to what she deemed the fitting reception of her dearly loved eldest son and his unknown bride.

"I shall put the dinner off till eight, Jenifer. That will give you time to do all the flowers after you come back. What will your father say when he hears of it? I wish he would come before any of these possible tennis people arrive. It will be so awkward telling him before them all. I wonder what your father will say."

"Father will be furious for five minutes, and then he will make us feel that we are not half fervid enough in our expressions of delight at the prospect of receiving Hubert's bride. Don't trouble yourself more than you can help, mother dear, while I'm away. And now I'm off!"

The girl took the shopping-list, and went out to her pony-trap with a mind more perplexed, and a heart more burdened, than they had ever been in all her previous life. This sudden, unexpected announcement of her eldest brother's marriage with a wife of whom his family had never even heard distressed her sorely. For Hubert ranked next to her mother in Jenifer's affections, and that Hubert should have acted in an underhand and selfishly thoughtless way towards his own people, for the sake of a "strange woman," made her smart with the bitter pain of impotency which comes over the majority of women-folk at some time or other during their lives.

It has been said that Hubert came next to her mother in the girl's affections, and this was the truth, extraordinary as it may appear when it is added that Jenifer had lived twenty-two years in the world, and that her beauty was a fact which no one could gainsay.

It was beauty of an order that satisfied the requirements of the educated as well as of the uneducated eye. She had fair height, and well rounded and proportioned length of limb; and she had a face pure as a young rose in colouring, and sweet as the sweetest womanly woman's can be in expression. Her starry eyes were full of solicitude for the well-being of those about her, and her little steadfast mouth and chin were never set so firmly as when she

was bent upon the task of lightening her mother's labours.

Jenifer Ray was the kind of girl of whom people say "she is good all round," without taking the trouble to analyse in what that goodness consists. To the eyes of outsiders it was apparent that Jenifer rode well, drove skilfully, danced deliciously, played tennis as if she had been born for no other end than to be the champion of her district, and talked to every man she met as freely as she talked to her brothers.

And all these accomplishments of hers, she declared—and meant the declaration from the bottom of her veracious soul—she owed to her brother Hubert.

Lovely Jenifer Ray with the real germander blue eyes had not lacked lovers. But still at twenty-two she could truthfully aver, "Nobody I care for comes a courting," therefore she was heart-free Jenifer Ray still.

She had not lacked lovers. I think I could not endeavour to make a heroine out of a young woman of twenty-two who, being blessed with beauty and opportunity, had failed to attract men to her. There will be no difficulty of this kind to deal with in the case of Jenifer Ray. She had been a magnet of considerable force to many a good man. But up to the present time she had never responded. Her heart had never spoken. Her brother Hubert was her bean ideal, and though his enforced absences from home had only been broken by brief visits at rare intervals during the last few years, he still engrossed all the thought and consideration which Jenifer could spare from her daily round of duties and amusements.

It may easily be imagined, this being the case, that the terse telegram, in which he had announced the fact of his marriage, had shocked and wounded the sister who believed herself to be fully in her brother's confidence.

It was very terrible to Jenifer that he should have married in secret. It seemed to her that it was a signal given that he meant to wrench himself apart from the home-circle. If he had only sent a few lines expressive of a hope that this sudden choice of his would meet with the love and approval of his family, Jenifer would have been ready with the love, at any rate, on the instant. But there was an element of "not carishness" about the telegram that gave her great alarm.

"And he might have married anybody

in the world," she thought in her profound sisterly faith. "There is no one in the world too good for him! and he has married someone who has made him sly to us."

Her heart was heavy and her head ached, but she did not let Nettle, the pony, lag on his way. As she drove him from shop to shop in Exeter, there were many who noticed that Miss Ray looked very thoughtful. Indeed, so absorbed was she in the contemplation of the subject of her brother's marriage, that she passed several acquaintances without recognising them. At last, one bolder than the rest, turned, after lifting his hat, when he heard her pull up at the game-shop. And as she sprang out of the trap he contrived to be passing.

"You here, Miss Ray, and a tennis-party going on at Moor Royal? What does this portend?"

"You here, Captain Edgecumb, when we all thought you safe on leave for the next month? You would have had an invitation for tennis to-day, only father told us you were away."

"I came back unexpectedly—got sick of London, and sick for—one of the environs of Exeter. May I come in and help you to choose some of Tammy's wild-fowl?"

"No; but you may hold Nettle; or, better still, you go in and get what I want and I'll get into the trap again."

Then she told him what she wanted, and forgot him during the few minutes he was in the shop.

When he came out again, she stooped forward and said:

"You generally see Hubert when you go to town. Did you call on him this time?"

"I tried to look him up," he said, engaging himself in rearranging her parcels in the bottom of the trap, "but he was out when I called."

"Ah, then, you didn't see him, and you don't know."

Then she paused in order to control her voice; and after a moment, during which Captain Edgecumb never lifted his eyes from the parcels, she added:

"He is coming home to-night. He is married, and his wife and he are coming home to-night."

He lifted his eyes to hers quickly enough now, and she was sure there was something of surprise and something of anger in their expression.

"Married, is he?" he said coldly. "Rather sudden, isn't it? Some fellows

like doing surprise-tricks. I'm a quiet fellow, and don't go in for sensation myself. Who's the lady?"

"We don't know yet."

"Well, accept my warmest congratulations, and allow me to express a hope that you'll find your sister-in-law all you can desire. Hubert's a splendid fellow, and is sure to have chosen wisely."

He lifted his hat and stood aloof as he spoke, and Jenifer drove off, with the last expression that had flitted across his handsome face photographed on her memory.

"How sympathetic he is! He looked quite sorry for me. And yet I never said a word to make him think I didn't like Hubert's marriage."

Captain Edgecumb resumed his stroll through the High Street, musing on what he had just heard.

"It clears my path towards the other one; but by Jove! I didn't think you would have stolen such a march as this on me, Miss Effie; but, no matter! I only hope, for Jenifer's sake, you won't ruin Hubert Ray."

As Jenifer more than half feared and expected, she found all the possible guests assembled on the tennis-ground when she got home. But though the moving spirit of Moor Royal was absent, the mistress of the house had done well for them. That is to say, she had permitted those who came to flirt to do so without interruption, and she had given plenty of tea, coffee, cakes, delicately rolled bread-and-butter, grapes, and champagne-cup to those who think tennis a snare and a delusion without these accompaniments.

And all of these guests were full of curiosity respecting the great event; for Mrs. Ray had deemed it better not to make a mystery about what must be so soon widely known.

So she had told them that her son was married, and that he and his bride would be home that night, and that was all she had to tell.

Time went on, the tennis-party broke up and dispersed, and each individual member of it carried away a different version of the story of Hubert Ray's secret marriage, for circulation in his or her own set.

It grew dusk in these October days at six o'clock, and at seven Hubert and his wife would arrive. And still the head of the house, the master of the family, was absent and in ignorance of his eldest son's

marriage. Mrs. Ray grew strangely nervous.

Her husband was wont to be out late frequently, for he was an ardent sportsman, and with his duck-gun and punt he would pass many a winter night on the marshes about Exmouth.

But it seemed to her this night that it was an extraordinary thing that he should be absent from home on such an important occasion, and in her anxiety that all should seem smooth to Hubert, she almost found it in her heart to blame her husband for his consistent unpunctuality.

At seven o'clock Jenifer came down, dressed for dinner, into the drawing-room, and found her mother there alone.

"Is Jack in, mother dear?" she asked.

"Yes, Jenny; Jack came in ten minutes ago. I thought he might have been with your father, but Jack has seen nothing of him all day."

"Have you told Jack about Hubert, mother?"

Mrs. Ray nodded.

"And what does Jack think about it?"

"My dear Jenifer, you know Jack's way. He whistled when I told him that Hubert was married, and when I asked him if he didn't think it odd that Hubert had never said a word about it to us, he whistled louder still. I do wish your father would come in, Jenifer; it—it's not at all the way in which I should wish to receive Hubert's wife."

"If Hubert's wife has a grain of good in her, she'll think her reception as perfect as you mean it to be. Jack must be dressed in time to help you to-day. I'll go and hurry him."

And Jenifer went off in search of her youngest brother, with a sense of oppression and uncertainty about her such as had never afflicted her before.

Jack was still whistling when his sister knocked at his door, and she felt that she could have rebuked him hotly for such evidence of callousness, when her soul was being wrung by doubts and fears for Hubert.

"Make haste down, and do be a little grave for once, Jack," she said, as a handsome lad, the very counterpart of herself, opened the door.

"Why am I to be grave? I was preparing to be especially festive! I thought it was the right thing to be when a bride was hurled into the midst of a family."

"What do you think about it, really, Jack?"

"I haven't thought much about it, only I know I shouldn't like to think that you would marry a fellow, and bear down upon his people without having been duly advertised. What do you think of it yourself, Jenny?"

"I'm afraid to think. I'm afraid I shall never like her, and shall never forget that she has been the cause of making Hubert do the first mean thing he ever did in his life."

Jack's room was in a side wing, and his window looked out on the stable-yard at the east end of the window. But even at this distance from the front entrance, sounds reached them now, as of an arrival and confusion.

"They've come," Jenifer said, quick changes of colour fleeting over her face. "Jack, come down with me. I dread——"

She paused abruptly. More sound, more confusion. The trampling now of many feet, and then a long sharp cry.

At the sound of that cry the young sister and brother sped along the corridor and down the stairs on flying feet. There in the hall, held back—hustled back it almost seemed—by distracted, weeping servants, stood their mother, quiet now, but with such a look of horror on her face as made them pray that she might cry, scream, do anything to relieve that terrible tension of agony. And there on a hurdle, covered up with rugs, "something" was lying in such awful stillness that they knew at once it was death.

And further knew that death and their father had met.

REBUKES.

"REBUKE a wise man and he will love you," says Solomon, and no doubt he is right—so far. Right, that is to say, within the limitation he sets in the proverb. That limitation is, however, a very widely extending one. Without necessarily accepting the Carlylean dictum that we "humans" are mostly fools, we may pretty safely assume that the rebuking of wise men is the exception to the rule of rebukes. The wise show their wisdom in not laying themselves open to rebuke, and though a fool may rebuke them when they have not "laid themselves open," they will not love a foolish rebuker. It is generally the unwise who are subject to rebuke, and they in their unwisdom are rarely prepared to consider a rebuke a good thing in any

sense of the phrase. It is hardly to be expected that they should. They are the galled jades and wince. It is those whose withers are unwrung who can enjoy a rebuke, who can appreciate its point or wit; not greatly caring whether or not it may have been deserved, so that it be laid on with a trowel. And it is from this free and easy standpoint that we propose entering upon the subject here.

Edmund Kean was wont to say of himself that he could see a sneer across Salisbury Plain, and his career gave a special significance to the expression. He had the sensitive temperament indicated by his hyperbolic saying, and in his earlier years he had, to a greater degree than most other men of whose lives we have record, suffered from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. When we bear these things in mind, it is easy to understand that the great tragedian would, in the days of his fame and prosperity, sometimes assume the right to rebuke those whom, rightly or wrongly, he believed to have evilly entreated him in the days of his adversity. How, when moved to wrath, he would deliver a rebuke may be easily imagined. In the biographies of Kean, several instances are given of the style of the great actor in the character of a rebuker. On one occasion when fulfilling a starring engagement at Portsmouth, he accepted an invitation to luncheon at one of the chief hotels of the place. The landlord waited on the party in person. Kean no sooner caught sight of him than his manner altered. "Stay, is not your name —?" The landlord answered in the affirmative. "Then, sir, I will not eat or drink in your house. Eight years ago I went into your coffee-room, and modestly requested a glass of ale. I was then a strolling player, ill-clad, and poor in pocket. You surveyed me from top to toe, and having done so I heard you give some directions to your waiter, who looked at me suspiciously, and then presented to me the glass with one hand, holding out his other for the money. I paid, and he gave me the glass. I am better dressed now. I can drink Madeira, I am waited on by the landlord in person—but am I not the same Edmund Kean that I was then, and had not Edmund Kean the same feelings then as he has now?" The landlord stammered an apology. "Apology!" exclaimed the tragedian scornfully. "Away with you, sir. I will have none of your wine." With this he hurriedly left the house.

On another occasion a manager, who in former days had dealt hardly with Kean, had fallen into reduced circumstances and asked Edmund to play for his benefit. The latter consented. On the night before the performance Kean and a large party of actors were seated in a tavern-parlour, when the ex-manager, thinking the remembrance of ancient indignity buried, got up and made a speech about Kean's generosity, and informed the company that the great tragedian, who had known him in his prosperity, was not averse to prove himself a friend in his adversity. This was too much for Kean; he rose to his feet and, directing a withering glance at the manager, said to him, "Do not let us misunderstand each other. I am bound to you by no ties of former acquaintance. I do not play for you because you were once my manager or a manager. If ever a man deserved his destiny it is you; if ever there was a family of tyrants it is yours. I do not play for you for former friendship, but I play for you because you are a fallen man." Afterwards, Kean, when excusing his warmth of temper, said: "I am sorry I forgot myself, but when I and mine were starving, that fellow refused to let a subscription for me be entertained in the theatre."

Nobler, however, than any of the rebukes directed against those who had wounded his feelings in the days of his poverty was that which, when fame and fortune were smiling upon him, he administered to the Earl of Essex. That nobleman, who was one of his most ardent admirers, remonstrated with him for being seen arm-in-arm with Incledon, the singer, telling him that it would militate against his being received in aristocratic circles. Kean replied: "My lord, Mr. Incledon was my friend in the strictest sense of the word, when I had scarcely another friend in the world; and if I should now desert him in the decline of his popularity, or fall of his fortune, I should little deserve the friendship of any man, and be quite unworthy the favourable opinion your lordship has done me the honour to entertain of me."

Even in the struggling period of his career Kean could be fierce and fearless in rebuke. When in his strolling days he was playing at Guernsey, he was violently written down by one of the local papers on his first appearance as Hamlet. The audience at the theatre on the second night, when he played Richard the Third, greeted him with derisive laughter and hisses. For a while

he played on, hoping that his acting would overcome opposition, but the storm continuing, he boldly advanced to the front of the stage, and, with flashing eye and tremendous emphasis, applied to the audience the words of his part: "Unmannered dogs, stand ye when I command."

A somewhat similar anecdote, though milder of its kind, is told of Frédéric Lemaitre. In one of his favourite parts, that of the needy adventurer, Robert Macaire, he took a dirty paper from his pocket from which he offered his stage friend, Bertrand, a pinch of snuff. The public hissed him for this. Lemaitre, who knew his audience, threw the paper away and produced a golden snuff-box, from which he offered a second pinch to Bertrand. Thereupon the public applauded. "Excuse me, gentlemen," said Frédéric, addressing himself to the pit, "the bit of paper was better, it was more in keeping with the character. You ought to hiss the golden snuff-box."

As ready-witted a rebuke as any recorded in theatrical annals, is that attributed to a "poor player" in a provincial company. He was cast for a minor character in *The Miller and His Men*. An overbearing "leading man," who was the Grindoff of the play, demanded, in melodramatic tones, "Is the bags removed?" to which the subordinate but better educated actor promptly replied, "One of them are," emphasising his answer in such a manner as to force its point upon "the house," which was moved to a burst of laughter at the expense of the leading man.

As of Edmund Kean so of the brilliant wit and orator, John Philpot Curran, it may be readily believed that his delivery of a rebuke was specially effective. Like Kean, too, he was very prompt to rebuke. When in Parliament he was always in the cold shade of opposition, where his powers of debate, and more particularly his powers of invective, made him a thorn in the flesh to ministers. At that time judges were appointed chiefly from considerations of political partisanship, and Curran, when practising his profession of barrister, frequently found the "court" coldly, not to say insultingly disposed towards him. In this position of affairs originated some of the best of the many rebukes associated with his name. Once when engaged in a case that was being tried before Fitzgibbon, the Irish Chancellor, that functionary had brought on to the bench with him a large

Newfoundland dog, to which he was ostentatiously attentive while the advocate was addressing an elaborate argument to him. At a critical point of the speech the judge turned quite away, and appeared to be wholly engrossed with the dog. Curran ceased to speak. "Go on, go on, Mr. Curran," exclaimed the chancellor. "Oh, I beg your pardon," said Curran, "I was under the impression that your lordships were in consultation." But a far more scathing rebuke was that with which Curran "set down" Judge Robinson. The last-named personage was the author of a number of ill-written but unscrupulous and scurrilous pamphlets in favour of the Government of the day. As he was not known to have had any other recommendation, it was more than suspected that he had been raised to the judicial bench solely in reward for political hack-work. At a time when Curran, though rising into notice, was still a poor and struggling man, he was speaking in the court over which Robinson presided. Touching upon some opinion that had been put forward by the opposing counsel, he remarked that he had examined all his books, and could not find a single case that supported the contention of the other side. "That may be, Mr. Curran," sneered Robinson, "but I suspect your law library is rather limited." For a moment Curran eyed the purse-proud toady of the political powers that were, and then broke forth: "It is very true, my lord, that I am poor, and this circumstance has certainly rather curtailed my library. My books are not numerous, but they are select, and I hope have been perused with proper dispositions. I have prepared myself for this high profession rather by the study of a few good books, than by the composition of a great many bad ones. I am not ashamed of my poverty, but I should be ashamed of my wealth if I could stoop to acquire it by servility and corruption. If I rise not to rank, I shall at least be honest, and should I ever cease to be so, many an example shows me that an ill-acquired elevation, by making me more conspicuous, would only make me the more universally and notoriously contemptible."

A rebuke may sometimes be very effectively put into practical form. Thus, at a time when there was a heavy duty upon French gloves, a packet addressed to the French Ambassador having accidentally come undone, the Custom House authorities discovered that it consisted of gloves,

whereupon they sent it on as an unpaid post-letter; and though the double postage amounted to more than the single duty, it was paid without comment. Very neat and characteristic, in the way of practical rebukes, was that of Talleyrand, to a faithful but too inquisitive confidential servant, whom he saw from the window of his apartment coolly reading a letter entrusted to him to deliver. On the next day a similar commission was confided to the servant, and to the second letter was added a postscript, couched in the following terms: "You can send a verbal answer by the bearer. He is perfectly well acquainted with the whole affair, having taken the precaution to read this previous to its delivery."

Dean Ramsay, in his *Reminiscences*, tells a similar and equally characteristic story of an old Forfarshire lady. She knew the weakness of her man-servant, and when she wished a note to be taken without delay, held it open, and read it over to him, saying: "There noo, Andrew, ye ken a' that's in't, noo dinna stop to open it, but just send it off."

Not bad in its way either was Lord Chesterfield's practically humorous rebuke of the craze for having far-reaching portrait galleries of ancestors. In his own gallery he placed two old heads, inscribed respectively Adam de Stanhope and Eve de Stanhope.

Of the rebuke indirect, one of the finest examples is that attributed to Dr. South. Once when preaching before Charles the Second, he observed that the monarch and several of his attendants had fallen asleep. Presently one of the latter began to snore, whereupon the bishop broke off his sermon, and exclaimed: "Lord Lauderdale, I am sorry to interrupt your repose, but let me entreat you not to snore so loud lest you awaken his majesty." Less indirect, but more severe, was a rebuke said to have been spoken from the pulpit by a dissenting minister of modern times. While he was preaching he was annoyed by some young people in the congregation whispering and giggling. He paused, looked at the disturbers, and said: "I am always afraid to reprove those who misbehave themselves for this reason: Some years since, when I was preaching, a young man who sat before me was constantly laughing, talking, and making uncouth grimaces. I paused and administered a severe rebuke. After the close of the service a gentleman said to me: 'Sir, you have made a great mistake. That young man whom you reprov-"

ed is an idiot.' Since then I have always been afraid to reprove those who misbehave themselves in chapel, lest I should repeat that mistake and reprove another idiot." During the rest of the service, the story concludes, there was good order.

Of clerical rebukers, few have been more apt than the Rev. Rowland Hill. Once he was attending a meeting for organising a committee for carrying out some public movement. The names of several persons engaged in trade having been mentioned, a gentleman present interposed the remark that he thought some regard should be paid to the respectability of the society, and that tag rag and bob-tail should not be on the committee. On the instant Rowland Hill rose from his seat, and lifting up his hands in the attitude of prayer, exclaimed: "God bless tag, God bless rag, God bless bob-tail." Having uttered these words, he sat down, and the tradesmen were placed on the committee without further opposition. On another occasion a member of his congregation who, to his great annoyance, avoided coming to chapel in time for the prayers, and arrived only just in time to hear the sermon, came to him to complain of the partiality of a magistrate. Rowland gave him a searching look, and with an emphasis and manner peculiar to himself, replied: "Then why do you not come to public worship in proper time to pray that God would grant all magistrates grace to execute justice and maintain truth?"

Incisive and dry as becomes its nationality, was the rebuke of the Scotch shepherd to Lord Cockburn of Bonaly. That nobleman was sitting on the hillside with the shepherd, and observing the sheep reposing in the coldest situation, he said to him: "John, if I were a sheep I would lie on the other side of the hill." The shepherd answered: "Aye, my lord, but if ye had been a sheep ye would hae had mair sense."

Less epigrammatically neat but more richly deserved was the following rebuke to an unnamed lord, quoted in Selden's *Table Talk*. "A great lord and a gentleman talking together, there came a boy by leading a calf with both his hands. Says the lord to the gentleman, 'You shall see me make the boy let go his calf;' with that he came towards him thinking the boy would have put off his hat, but the boy took no notice of him. The lord seeing that, 'Sirrah,' says he, "do you not know me, that you use no reverence?' 'Yes,' says the boy, "if your lordship will hold my calf, I will put off my hat.'"

Emphatic and unmistakable, at any rate, if not specially polished, was a rebuke cited by Coleridge, in illustration of the political corruption of the Maltese, at the time of the surrender of their island to England. A marquess of ancient family applied to the governor, Sir Alexander Ball, to be appointed his valet. "My valet?" said Ball; "what can you mean, sir?" The marquess said he hoped that he should then have had the honour of presenting petitions to his excellency. "Oh, that's it, is it?" said Sir Alexander. "My valet, sir, brushes my clothes, and brings them to me. If he dared to meddle with matters of public business, I should kick him downstairs."

Worthy to be coupled with the above is a rebuke said to have been given by a good old Quaker lady to a tradesman who had been mendaciously puffing his goods to her. "Friend," said she, "what a pity it is such a sin to lie, when it seems so necessary to thy business."

Greatest of all rebukes is that contained in Nathan's parable to David, with its stern and dramatic finale, "Thou art the man!" But here we have wished to keep to secular records and comparatively modern instances.

THE BISHOP'S REPENTANCE.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

OUR narrative now shifts to the cathedral city of Alchester, or rather to the bishop's palace, some two miles beyond the environs of the city. It was a bright summer morning, and the bishop and the examining chaplain were sitting together in the snug inner library, the windows of which opened on the wide lawn, which sloped gently down to the margin of that little brook, the Al, which gave name to the city and county. The morning's letters were on the table, and some of them necessitated some consultation between the chief and the chaplain. There was a little official note from the Treasury, desiring my lord to be in his place in Parliament on a certain night, when Her Majesty's Opposition would be bringing on a motion damaging to Her Majesty's Government; one or two invitations to those grander and more solemn festivities among county families, which bishops may bless by their presence; of course several applications for diocesan subscriptions, which bishops have to meet in some abun-

dance; and correspondence about refractory curates, ritualistically or rationalistically inclined.

"I see the poor old rector of Danehill has gone at last," quoth the chaplain. "He has held out a wonderfully long time."

Dr. Grant murmured a confirmatory sound, and added:

"And here's a letter from his son-in-law, young Musgrave, asking for the living."

"Of course," said the chaplain, and the cold sneer of the monosyllables seemed to brush away all poor Tom's chances at once.

"He has never given us any trouble," said the bishop—this was perhaps the highest praise that a bishop could bestow—"and his father was a very worthy man, an old friend of my own."

"It is an important living," said the chaplain, "a very important living. A clear six hundred a year."

He was wondering whether the bishop had any nephew whom he would be likely to appoint. If not, he had a nephew or two of his own, for whom he was naturally anxious to make a suitable provision.

"It is a bad thing," said the bishop thoughtfully, swaying the hand that held Tom Musgrave's letter, "to let a curate succeed a rector. What one naturally likes to see in a parish is an infusion of new blood."

The bishop quite forgot that his own blood was now old and chill, and that it would probably be much for the welfare of the diocese if he made way for a new and younger man, who might infuse fresh energy into it.

"It is also a great objection to let a son-in-law succeed a father-in-law. It looks like nepotism. At the present day the public don't like that sort of thing."

So said the examining chaplain, with amiable inconsistency forgetting that he had a nephew in the Church, and that he had specially charged himself with pushing his progress.

Here was a combination of fine general principles against poor Musgrave, and one which it would be very difficult to resent. How often it happens that a man lays down some large general principle, not very safe in itself, and still less safe in its applications, which causes some ruthless personal injustice!

Dr. Grant might certainly be trusted to write a very civil letter of refusal to Musgrave. He excelled in writing this sort

of letter. He could refuse a kindness with a better grace than most people could show in bestowing one. He thought that, anyhow, he would wait a few days. He had no one particularly in his mind for this bit of patronage. He was not personally acquainted with the excellence of his chaplain's nephew. There would be a perfect snow-storm of letters making application in the course of a few days, and he could make a deliberate selection. A good many letters did come in the course of a few days, including an urgent one from Tom's loving father. All the same Tom did not nearly come within the limits of the competition.

Something very remarkable happened about this time, one night in the stillness and silence of the bishop's lonely bed-chamber. The bishop was a widower, and held the dogma of a certain council of the Church that a bishop must never take a second wife. What happened to the bishop was one of those serious mental crises that do sometimes happen to some of us. The bishop did not see a vision or a ghost, although I must not be taken as disbelieving in the possibility of visions and ghosts. Neither did he have a marvellous dream, although I could tell some thrilling stories of marvellous dreams. Bishop Grant's mental state did not arise from sleep, but from sleeplessness. He had taken his one small cup of coffee. He had read through a very churchy article in *The Quarterly Review*, which he considered a highly appropriate way of concluding the evening. Then he retired to rest, but not to sleep. His sleep forsook him altogether in a way which had not happened to him for a great number of years. He tried all the approved plans for invoking sleep, but these proved wholly futile. He got up, and walked up and down the room, but that wouldn't do. He fixed his eye steadily on the bed-post—his night-light just enabled him to detect its outline—but the bed-post failed to charm him. He buried his head under the bedclothes, and attempted to count five hundred, but that simply increased his mental excitement. The bishop had no sedatives or narcotics in his room. He altogether disapproved of these things, more especially as he never wanted them. Then the bishop fell into a train of thought which soon lapsed into a series of remembrances. Year after year the bishop went back through a long chain of recollections, hugging himself and blessing himself on his promotion, and dignity, and influence,

and wondering how from such very small beginnings he had risen to such prosperous issues, while much stronger men had dropped off, and much abler men had attained no such success. Was this, indeed, the best of all possible worlds, or were these balances to be set right in another state of existence?

The bishop's musings were not simply congratulatory. He moralised, and he moralised extremely well and earnestly. He was a sober, serious Christian in his heart. He was a good man, and had a conscience, the sort of conscience which belongs to a political bishop. It is easy to fling stones at people in high places, but for many years he had led an active, blameless life, and he had the quality and power of governing, which is a very difficult and rare attainment. As he reviewed the story of his days he recognised responsibilities and omissions. Had he fairly met all the claims which his unexpected greatness had brought upon him? Had he not been content to accept the flatteries and civilities of London houses, of the county people, and his little clerical court, and had he not rather shrunk from the more laborious and self-sacrificing part of his work? Had he ever visited and sought out modest merit and uncomplaining indigence among his working clergy? Had he not been content with laudatory puffs and paragraphs in the papers, with the good word of men in high station like himself, with satisfying popular opinion around him? Thus the bishop meditated, and administered a somewhat severe episcopal charge to himself.

What was he doing that time last year, and the year before that, and before that, and before that? So he ran swiftly through the story of his days. It was a kind of introspection which was common to him, and indeed might well and wisely be common to all of us. But perhaps never before had he so vividly and freshly recalled "the days of his life." Many of those days were not very distinctly borne in mind by him. The rich, crowded, prosperous years during which he had held his bishopric were by no means remembered with such sharp outline as the years of struggling and comparative penury. In that lucid time of vigilant wakefulness the far-off years drew near once more, and with more clearness than any of the years that followed them. Once more he was at college. He remembered with almost delirious joy when first he found his name the very first on the class-list; when, before

that, he gained the exhibition from his school and the scholarship from the college. He remembered, too, the days when he and Musgrave had chummed, when his breakfast was always taken into his friend's room, and how that friend shared with him many a simple luxury which was altogether beyond his own means, and gave him the loan of books; and on one occasion, when all his money was gone in defraying his town and college bills, his old friend had lent him a ten-pound note, which he could not very well have spared, which paid his travelling expenses home and enabled him to tide prosperously through the vacation. It gave him just a little pang to reflect that he had not very kindly treated his old friend or his old friend's son.

The stream of memory still flowed backward, and landed him in the old grammar-school, where he had received all that thorough grounding which had paid him so well in his University career. Then he and Dyke had been great competitors. It was true that he had generally beaten Dyke, but then Dyke had beaten the more than hundred boys who had been below him. How very odd it was that Dyke should come as a curate into the very diocese where he was bishop, and odd that he and Dyke, who had once been so intimate, should now be almost absolute strangers! And some words occurred to him about the first being last and the last first.

He was an old man now; but were there not many old men whose last days had been their best days? Might he not see through his own eyes instead of through the eyes of other people? Might not his experience, and ripened judgment, and mild loving tolerance effect as much as the more ambitious energies of younger men? If there were any arrears of duty and of kindness to be made up, could he not in the days that might yet be granted hope to overtake them? Before the long night came on of extreme old age and of death, might he not turn away from what was merely secular and ambitious, and do some simple and good work in the twilight of life?

Further than this outline we do not intrude on the meditations of the bishop. Such as they were, they left his heart happier and brighter than perhaps he had known in those years of greatness. He fell into a sweet slumber, and slept the sleep of the just.

Next day the bishop walked over from his Palace to attend morning service at the cathedral. When in residence, he always made a point of going into Alchester on certain days. He always liked to stand well with the mayor and corporation, though the majority of them were Non-conformists, and took the chair at some town meeting or committee, and occupied his throne during service at the cathedral, and made diligent enquiry how his Theological College was getting on. He liked to be spoken of as "the diligent and indefatigable bishop." Then he would go back, after lunching with the dean or one of the canons, with a good appetite and a good conscience, to his dinner.

On this occasion, as he was taking his walks abroad in the streets, to the great admiration of the beholders, who wondered that a bishop should walk about on his legs like an ordinary being, he almost stumbled against the Reverend Dyke, who, by a fortuitous combination of circumstances, happened to be at Alchester that day. Mr. Dyke belonged to a friendly book club of country parsons, who met once a year for an early dinner and cosy chat, and a sale by Dutch auction of publications that had been ordered by subscribers during the previous year.

Now, in the ordinary way, Mr. Dyke would have given the bishop a respectful salutation, which would have been responded to by a stately bow. But to-day his lordship came up, eager-eyed, eager-voiced, and with both hands outstretched, and greeted him most heartily.

"My dear Dyke, is it you? I have not seen you for ages. I am afraid that we old friends are quite forgetting one another."

"My lord," stammered Dyke, rather taken aback, "if this is so it is not my fault."

Something like an extra colour came into Dr. Grant's bronzed face.

"Never mind that. There is something that I want to talk to you about. Come and dine with me. We can put you up for the night at the house."

There was many a clergyman in the diocese to whom the episcopal invitation would have given a flutter of joyous excitement. It might have been the case once, and not so many years ago, with Thomas Dyke; but he was now long past that sort of thing. A solemn dinner and a long sitting with the bishop, estranged from him by three-quarters of a lifetime,

was not at all to his taste. He had much rather finish up his day by a friendly cup of tea with a certain minor canon, and get home comfortably in the cool of evening.

"No, thank you, my lord. I am not prepared to sleep in Alchester to-night; but if you wish to speak to me, I will walk with you in the direction of the Palace."

"The old rector of Danehill has gone at last," said the bishop as they walked along. "Now, my old friend, I feel that you have waited much too long without preferment, and, if you will take the living, I will give it you with the greatest pleasure."

There was a time when this living would have exactly suited old Dyke, especially if the rectory need not have changed its mistress. The idea was intolerable to his mind that he, of all men, should be the means of turning her out of the place where she had lived her little life.

If he could possibly do this dear fair girl some good service—still dear and fair, though the little children were now clinging to her knees—the loyal old man felt that the dearest wish of his heart would be gratified.

"My lord," he said, "I am very grateful, but I am an old man now, and do not care for the pleasant things of life. I will keep on as I am as long as I may, and I am sure that in some way I shall be provided for as long as I live. But there is the curate of Danehill, my lord—a man who has done his work very faithfully and well for years past. If you would kindly let me have a voice in the disposal of the living which you offer me, I would urge his claim as strongly as possible."

"I know Mr. Musgrave," answered the bishop. "He is a worthy man, and the son of a worthy man, and an old friend of my own. It is fully my intention to look after his interests. But it is not for the good of a parish that a curate should succeed his rector or a son-in-law his father-in-law."

"My lord, if he is really a good man why should you displace him for one who may not be a good man? Rules are made for men, and not men for rules. No rules should be so inflexible that their application should do harm instead of good."

"I'll think it over, Dyke; I'll think it over. As for you, it will end by my being obliged to make a canon of you. You will not mind that?"

To say the truth, that was exactly the thing which Mr. Dyke would not mind.

The bishop, as he said, turned it over in his mind. He determined to carry out his new idea of seeing things with his own eyes. He would take strict regard to the requirements of the district and the character of the clergyman. He would go to Danehill and see things for himself.

He determined that he would go off the very next day.

Unfortunately the right reverend prelate had not mastered the difference between Danehill and Danehill Road Station. He was not so much acquainted as he might have been with the physical geography of his county. His original idea had been that he would pick up a fly at the station, investigate Danehill, and perhaps go on to my lord at the castle, and get his views on things in general, and Danehill in particular.

Arrived at Alchester Station a sudden idea struck the bishop, and he took a third-class ticket to his destination.

This was the first time that he had travelled third-class during his episcopate, and it brought him nearer than he had ever been before to the bucolic mind.

It was market-day at an important town on the line, and the carriages were filled with farmers and peasants. They had not a very extended dialect these rustics, a vocabulary limited to a very few hundred words, and they used much plainness of speech, enlivened with a provincial oath now and then which both amused and horrified the bishop.

The day had become suddenly overcast, and the rain came down heavily, which in the event turned out unfortunately for the bishop. The train stopped at every station, and at every station there was a constant going out and getting in. There was one bucolic being who nursed a basket of eggs on his knees, and had a sack of potatoes by his side, who was very affable with his lordship, and who turned out to be a native of Danehill. He liked the parson; parson had come very often when his mother had rheumatics; rheumatics were common at Danehill "because the sile be so loamy."

Could he read and write?

"Yes, he could a little; parson had taught him at the night-school. Young parson wasn't such a scholar as old parson; he spoke quite as plain in church as if he were speaking to two poor third-class chaps like you and me," said Hodge to his bishop.

The bishop was astute enough to see that if a man visited his sick poor, taught in a

night school, and preached a plain sermon, he was really doing a valuable kind of work in his way. Thus cogitating, and thus impressed, Dr. Grant alighted at Danehill Road Station. Any pleasing vision which he might have entertained of a well-equipped cab were speedily dispelled. No such thing had ever been seen in this part of the world within human history. The station-master being appealed to said that perhaps a gig, and certainly a light cart, might be obtained at Danehill, but nothing of that sort was to be seen at the station, except belonging to the neighbouring farmers, and they would not be coming back until late in the evening. Then the bishop heroically determined to walk. He told himself that he was quite a strong man and as well able to walk half-a-dozen miles as any young man in the land, and he accordingly trudged forth with an air of great determination and vigour. I have no doubt that Dr. Grant would have achieved his walk very successfully, but for two circumstances. The first was that the roads were in a state of primæval mud, and the bishop's boots, ordinarily used on carpets, lawns, and smooth pavement, were nearly lost in the mud altogether. A good deal of fog and drizzle successfully harmonised with the mud. After walking about four miles on a straight road the bishop came to a certain place where four roads met. Originally there had been a sign-post, but the sign-post had disappeared, and the parochial mind in vestry embodied considered that their own people knew their own roads without going to any expense for a new sign-post. The bishop being thus thrown on his natural sagacity, of course took the wrong road, being influenced in his choice by noticing two cottages at the bottom of a mile and a half of steepest hill. One of these was totally unfurnished, and the other was locked up, the people having all gone away for the day. Then the bishop discerned a farmhouse on the top of another hill, towards which he painfully made his way, realising that at his time of life it was easier to go downhill than uphill. At the farmhouse he found out that he had mistaken his road, which lay in the diametrically opposite direction. Any mile walked under these disappointing circumstances is as long as two, especially up a steep hill. Not a single human being did he meet to whom he might casually mention the story of his woes, caused by the reprehensible want of a sign-post. Very hungry

and thirsty, wet and wayworn was Dr. Grant when he found himself opposite The Montacute Arms, the one hostel of the village, hardly a shade better than an ordinary ale-house.

Had the bishop found an available carriage, I am afraid that he would have taken it, after the benign processes of refreshment and warming, and caught the up-train home. There was nothing to be hired but the light cart, and that would not be available for some hours. The thought occurred to his mind that he would ask the hospitality of the rectory, but he felt that it would be hard to accept Mr. Musgrave's hospitality and then refuse him the living. Up to that present moment he had not made up his mind to offer Mr. Musgrave the living; to say the truth he was not in the best humour either with Mr. Musgrave or with the parish of Danehill. However, The Montacute Arms owned one very decent room, where the Montacute tenants in the parish were entertained at an audit-dinner every half-year, and also a decent bed-chamber. Every bishop has, necessarily, a good deal of experience on the subject of strange bedrooms, while on confirmation tours, and this one's well-trained instinct told him that here was a bed that might be safely slept in. Here he made himself as comfortable as circumstances permitted; the landlord, who was a game-keeper on the estate, being able to produce a venison pasty. Then he sent a messenger to the station with a telegram, asking for his usual travelling-bag, and the messenger was to wait and bring it back by the last train. The next day was Sunday, but on that Sunday, and on any Sunday he chose, the bishop was a free man. His bag would include certain episcopal raiment which the bishop himself would sometimes playfully speak of as his ecclesiastical toggery, or as ladies have called it, his war-paint. It so happened that about sunset all the roughness of the day went off, and there was a pleasant time. The bishop's boots, socks, and gaiters being all dried effectively, he took his walks abroad; was favourably impressed by the beauty and order of the church, rectory, and schools, heard favourable accounts of the curate, and still more of the curate's wife. He met Hodge, of the potato sack, whom he enlivened with a shilling; then the bishop went to bed contentedly, and had a satisfactory night's rest.

The astonishment of Tom Musgrave may be easily conceived when the bishop, bag in hand, presented himself at the vestry,

as soon as Tom arrived there, and enquired how he could best assist in the service. Tom preached the sermon and the bishop gave the benediction. Tom preached one of his shortest and best sermons, respecting which, indeed, there was a rumour that all the best points had been put in by his wife. Then they went to dinner at the rectory—only a cold joint, salad, and home-brewed beer, for Mrs. Musgrave, at this period of anxiety and uncertainty, had placed everything upon the most economical footing. Dr. Grant liked his old friend's son and thought very favourably of his work, but perhaps he thought still more of his pretty, graceful wife, so good-looking, and also who looked so good, and perhaps most of the little children who clambered on his knee and called him "bisop." That night he and his bag went over to the rectory, and next morning he gave Tom the living.

It was generally allowed that Bishop Grant's last days were his best days. It was astonishing how much work he got through and how well he did it. He gave Dyke a canonry, and was able to do something for his old friend Musgrave. He was very fond of visiting Tom Musgrave and his wife at the rectory of Danehill, and the lady always met him with a pair of neat ponies at Danehill Road Station. And when he died, in the odour of sanctity, it was truly said of him, that he was one who had loved to show himself the poor man's friend.

GEOFFREY STIRLING.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

PART III. CHAPTER XV. EXILED.

IF Hilda had lost a mother, she had found an elder sister. Amid the desolation of her own home, another home had opened to her. The vicar and his gentle wife had taken her to the vicarage, and there told her that henceforth, until a nearer, dearer claim should wind about her heart and life, there should her home and shelter be.

The niche fitted her so well, and she it, that in a marvellously short time it almost seemed to her as though she had been an inmate of that quiet, happy home for years instead of for days only.

Her mind grew full of wonder at the surpassing wealth of tenderness the world holds for those who mourn, and who are surrounded by true and loving hearts. If she were Dr. Turtle's own child could he be more tender to her, more watchful over her, more thoughtful in his ministrations

to her bodily needs? If Davey were her own brother could he be more careful over her, more frankly, beautifully kind? Then there were Mr. and Mrs. Geddes who came to see her one evening just as the dusk was closing in, and who sat, one on either side, speaking softly, and evidently regarding Master Ralph's betrothed as a something unspeakably precious and sacred. Even Lady Boscawen's high nose and magnificent manner held no terrors for Hilda, since she saw a tear trickle down the former, and the latter was toned down to an unwonted gentleness.

"So you are going to marry Ralph, one of these days," said her ladyship, not without a little gulpiness of voice; "and going to live abroad? Well, my dear, I dare say it is better so, for a time; but I know I should have grown very fond of you, and I'm sorry to lose you. So is Denby, I assure you. It is only his way to put on a bouncing sort of manner when his feelings are touched. I really must ask you to look upon him with my eyes, which are used to him, my dear, and can read him through and through."

At which Denby looked very uncomfortable, and more "bouncing" than ever; for he had been beating his brain as to what to say to this pale-cheeked maiden, and had had his toil for nothing, so full was he of good intentions, and so clumsy in carrying them out.

"She looks as if she had seen a ghost, and couldn't get it out of her mind," he said, as he and his wife drove home together.

"It was your brusque manner frightened her," said Lady Boscawen, leaning back in the carriage majestically, but longing to get home that she might have a "good cry."

It had been a sad blow to her to learn that Ralph Stirling was going to travel in foreign lands once more, instead of settling down at the Dale with his bride. She fancied such conduct betrayed a want of confidence in herself, and in her will to float Hilda serenely on the waters of county society. She was hurt with Ralph, but when she tried to reason with him, he seemed to slip out of her hold, setting her remonstrances aside with a tender determination, even when most grateful for her interest in him and in Hilda.

After the storm, the calm.

So it was with Hilda Devenant.

The hush, the rest of Alicia's happy home were beyond measure solacing to that poor tired heart. The atmosphere of perfect love and sympathy in which her

mental consciousness now breathed held all the grace of healing.

Love, too, taught her courage. He who loved her so well—had he not cruelly suffered? Was he not, even now, wading through deepest waters of Marah?

What, then, was her sacred office? To comfort, to sustain him in the bitter struggle for the right which now lay before him.

She learned with an ecstasy of thankfulness that the flowers that he had laid on the pillow beside her dead mother were messengers of peace and pardon, that he bore no bitter hatred, cherished no vindictive resentment to the tortured, misguided woman who had wrought such evil for him and his, and had striven so hard to make his life barren and broken.

Even where he could not justify, he could forgive; where he must perforce condemn, he could pity.

"We shall have an anxious time of it together, dear," he said one gloaming-time, when the two were alone together in the pretty vicarage drawing-room; "a wearing and anxious time of it."

"Better together than separate," she said, smiling.

The dark rings of sorrow and weeping still encircled her eyes.

She looked such a slender creature in her deep black robes! Her face had grown white and small; the full rounded contour of the cheek had somewhat fallen, and the mouth, at rest, was sad.

But what a brave true soul looked out at him from her eyes; what an exquisite tenderness chased the sadness from her lips, as they smiled upon him tremblingly, or met his own in a parting kiss! How should he have borne his sorrows without her? What would life be to him, bereft of her?

"People will not wonder much at our taking to a wandering life," he said; "I have always been a restless kind of fellow, as Lady Boscawen said to me to-day; and you are willing to follow my altered fortunes, sweetheart, are not you?"

"Willing?" she said. "Oh, Ralph! I have lived alone with such dread fears—I have companied with my own weary aching heart through such dark hours of pain—that it seems like heaven, my darling, to know that never again—never as long as we shall have life together, shall I know what it is to be alone again!"

And so, with weeping that was laughter, and laughter that was weeping, she cast herself into the arms that held her with a

fond and hungry grip—then fell to abject weeping, amid a perfect storm of little catching sobs, over her darling's cruel fate.

"Oh, my love, my love!" she cried, "my exile, driven from home and country; my poor boy, sent adrift with only me to comfort him—my banished darling!"

"Banished?" he answered, "exiled? What folly are you talking, love? How can a man be banished when he takes all his world along with him?"

Then they grew calmer; talked of all Ralph's plans and difficulties; of how old Anthony was toiling to carry out his master's wishes; of poor Nurse Prettyman, entreating with tears to be allowed "go follow" the two into a new world and a new life; of a great hospital that one day should arise amid the growing population of Becklington, as a refuge for the sick and suffering; of a new church and schools; of all the mighty works of charity that should be (though the world should know it not) but works of restitution and expiation.

"Then, in time, I shall sell the Dale," said Ralph, and a shadow passed across his face.

Had he not built castles in that old home of his; and now—were they not tumbling about his ears?

But Hilda put her arms about his neck, and kissed away the sadness.

"You know I have something of my own, Ralph—all that poor old uncle Lemaire left me," she said; "we can add mine to yours, and then we sha'n't be quite poor," she added with an adorable air of mingled triumph and tenderness.

"Poor!" cried Ralph, radiant, as catching the reflection of her hopefulness; "how can we be anything but rich as long as we have each other?"

Which was, of course, the soundest logic, and not to be confuted by all the learning of the schools.

CHAPTER XVI. AT THE SAFE RETREAT.

It was an evening in early spring.

The hawthorn-tree that overshadowed the porch of The Safe Retreat was one great posy of tiny white buds, amid leaves of that exquisite delicate green that is never seen save when the world's garment of verdure is newly donned.

In the tea-gardens behind the inn the crocuses stood all arow, fair chalices of gold, of white, and soft, faint purple.

Widow Green was proud of her flower-garden, and with reason, too, and had been heard to call the hawthorn-tree, in front, the "luck of the house."

But now, though it was thick with buds, and though the swallows had come home from their winter wanderings and been fluttering about the market-place all day, the evenings were still chill enough to make the cosy, crimson-curtained parlour of the inn a welcome haven.

Here there were gathered a number of well-known faces, for it was Saturday night, and a pipe and a glass among friends were joys not to be despised by men who knew how to appreciate the good things of this life.

A pleasant subject, too, was under discussion, for they spoke of a wedding, smiling as they chatted and nodded over this reminiscence or that.

"'Twere a simple kind o' a wedding in the matter o' pomp and circumstance," said Farmer Dale, "but I never see'd two folk look more contenteder to be taking each other for better for waur than Maister Ralph and the girl Hilda. There wur such a light o' glad content shinin' i' her bonnie eyes, as might ha' made sunshine i' a dark place; and as for him—Lord ha' mercy! but how like the fayther he did look, as he come up afore t' vicar and smoilt a bit of a smoile as much as to say: 'It's a proud mon I am this day, and a happy—and I'm reet glad for a' men to see the pride and the gladness o' my heart. I'm coom here for to take her for better and for waur, and I don't care a dom for the waur as long as I hold her little hond i' moine.'"

"But Maister Ralph didna say all yon?" put in Jake, who was apt to be literal at times, or, at all events, obtuse in regard to other men's "figgers" of speech.

"Noa," replied the farmer, "but he looked it a'—and more beside—for the shadder o' a mighty sorrer was over him, same as has bin' over him ever sin' he came whoam to find the feyther dead and gone. It took his youth out o' him, did that sorrer, Jake—and youth's a jewel that, onct lost, none on us con foind no more, search how we may. He's lived ten years i' one, as the sayin' goes, has Maister Ralph; but I reckon he's a good comfort i' the true heart as beats beside his own; and there's time to look to too, which is a good doctor for a sick 'art."

"I never see'd a prattier splicin' to my moind then Maister Ralph's," said Jeremy. "I'd reared each blossom i' Miss Hilda's boquay from a buddin' bud, and knew 'em same as if they'd bin my own childer—eh! but they wur a bonnie lot;

and 'Jeremy,' says she, 'my husband says I have to thank you for these!' Didn't she grow rosy neither over the word as wur but strange to her sweet lips, but her eyes wur laughin' as she looked at him, and I reckon he gev' her a squeegee wi' 's arm for sayin' it out so pat and pratty."

"To hearken to old Anthony quaverin' out 'Amen,' like as if he'd bin a parish clerk all's days; and to see 'im givin' away the bride as purlite and nat'ral as if he wur her lawful grandfather, that's what tuk my fancy," said Jake; "and it seems but yesterday as it a' happened, tho' it's more nor a year ago; and happen there's a babby born to Maister Ralph by this."

"Weel, if so be as that's so, we don't be like to ha' much chance o' seein' on it," said Jeremy; "for there's no word o' the young couple comin' whoam; and some folks say as the Dale is like to be sold—me wi' 't, I reckon."

"Aye," put in Farmer Dale, "I've heerd some kind of a rumour as things moight be apt to turn out that way, and I tell yo' what it is—there's wanderin' blood somewheres among the Stirlings. Happen, ever so long back, one on 'em married wi' a gipsy, and that gipsy's natur' is allers risin' oop in 'em, same as bubbles i' wine, and instigatin' of 'em to be up and stirrin'. Then his father bred 'im up i' wanderin' ways, and had 'im taught to speak many strange tongues, so as he'd never need be baain' like a lost lamb i' strange pastures, an' none able t' make out what he wur at."

"There's none here has better cause to remember Maister Ralph's weddin'-day, than thee, farmer," said Jeremy; "for luck fell into thy lap, unbeknownt, as we may say, while t' bells o' the old church wur clatterin' fit to bring t' tower down."

"Aye, aye," said the farmer; "'twere an unlooked-for Christmas-gift I got that time; and I take it I did stare at our vicar an' old Anthony more than wur seemly, when they gin' me t' roll o' papers, and tould me as I'd paid my last quarter's rent for Dale Farm."

"'Twere t' ould Squire Stirling's wish for thee to have it. He'd ha' done t' deed himsen if he'd lived long enoo."

"So they said—so they said," answered the burly farmer, passing his hand thoughtfully over his head, stroking his hair into his eyes, and then pushing it back from his brow; "so they tould me."

"Yon wur a proud day for thy missus," said Jeremy.

"Aye, she wur reet fain, wur Nancy;

she laughed and she fair blethered both in a breath, and went nigh to strangle our Jim, so toightshe clipt 'im about t' neck. Mothers aye think more o' theer childer's good than their own; and Nance wur every bit as pleased to think as Jim, and his heirs after him, 'ud own t' ould place after she and I wur gone, as that we wur landowners i' place o' land-renters—that wur she!"

"It's the way wi' womenfolk," said Jake, speaking with an air as of vast experience of the sex, at which Jeremy put his tongue stealthily into the cheek next the farmer.

"'Twere a foine thing o' t' ould squoire to think o' makin' thee out-and-out owner o' t' land thee 'd tilled so weel," said Amos Callender; "an' a pratty action o' Maister Ralph to gie it over to thee on 's weddin'-day. There's more nor gipsy-blood i' the Stirlings, mates; there's a generous and lovin' sperrit. Aye, moy sakes! but what a thought it is, to call to moind Squoire Geoffrey, weak and wan, houldin' on t' winder-cheek o' t' bank winder, and axing for us to possess our souls i' patience, and trust him to do the best for everyone on us! I moind it same as if 't wur this very minute as now is. And I've oftentimes said to my old Bess as 'tis a marvel o' dealin' as that riddle wur never read. Somewheers on the earth the rascally chap as did the sin wanders wi' a heavy moind. This must be so, or Widow Bunycastle would ne'er have had her savin's sent all unbeknownst, and Jake theer 'ud never have had such a gaudy chain across his weskit."

To this Jeremy made reply in kind, bringing up his own experiences of that dreadful day long years ago, and telling how Master Ralph (then something about as high as the table) broke into bitter crying, and was carried off sobbing by Nurse Prettyman, when he heard tell of the people who were "sad and sorry."

The farmer and Jake were silent, and sat looking at the fire.

Soon after this, Amos Callender took his leave of the rest, saying that Bess and "the lass Em'ly" were gone out to a tea-drinking and he had promised to fetch them home; at which Jeremy also took his leave, moralising over the immensity of watchful care called for in the matter of young seedlings "planted out i' frames," these spring nights.

So out across the stones where the shadow of the budding hawthorn wavered in the keen clear wind, went the two; and Jake and the farmer were left to keep each other company.

Silence reigned a while.

Then the two men (being one on either side the cheery hearth) looked hard, each at the other.

"There's strange thoughts," said Jake, ruffling his hair all over his head till it looked like a badly made haycock; "there's fearsome thoughts as comes i' a mon's yed now an' agen wi'out axing leave, and settles theer like flies on carrion; there's thoughts as moight weel turn their faces to t' wall i' varry shame o' their own natur'; thoughts as coom and coom, no matter how yo' drive 'em off, same as they say a cloud o' boggarts chase a chap as tries to cross t' dyke-land after midnight on Hallow E'en."

Jake shook as he spoke; and by the look of fear upon his face, a boggart might have been peeping at him round the corner of the high-backed bench on which he sat. Farmer Dale, who had listened in grave silence, rubbing his hands slowly together and nodding his head as though to check off each item of his companion's discourse, now rose to his feet, standing with head bowed and hands clasped before him, much as he was wont to stand in church.

"There's thoughts as coom," he said, speaking both solemnly and sadly, "and wunna be cast out; or, if they be cast out, it's but to coom agen; but such-like thoughts should not be spoke, nor yet read by ony save by Him who reads the heart o' man same as an open book. It's ill work raking oop the ashes o' a dead mon; but to yo', neighbour Jake—a good mon and true, and one whose heart can harbour no bad feelin'—I'll say this much: happen as Squoire Geoffrey had a heavier burden to bear than me nor ony mon i' Becklington had a moind to think i' those dark days that's past and gone. An' if this be so, I've but one word to say, and this is it—Lord rest the soul that carried such a load!"

And Jake said "Amen to that."

Then the two passed out into the night across the shadow of the thorn-tree, and spoke no more of that strange riddle that had never been read.

But as time went on, and strange gifts of a munificent charity came to Becklington from the hand of the man who came back no more to claim his own, suspicions, like little snakes through grass, crept here and there with stealthy rustlings; yet never came out into the open, nor reared themselves in the light of day.

CHAPTER XVII. FAREWELL.

ONE more glimpse at Becklington, and it is a parting one.

The spring sunshine is glinting everywhere; shimmering down upon the stones of the old market-place; catching the vane on the town-hall, and twinkling in the little pewter can that Amos Callender's lass Emily is dangling to please the baby in her lap, as she sits at the door of the house-place watching for her father coming home to dinner.

Emily is on a visit to the old folks, and has brought her youngest born to make the grandmother's heart young again, and set her off in endless recollections of Emily's own baby-days, and baby-feats.

There she is, the cheery soul, peeping round the door, and clapping her hands to make the baby laugh. And there comes Amos, swinging along as if all Becklington belonged to him; while Jake, sitting at his work over the way, waves his hand with as much dignity as if he were bestowing a benediction, and the lanky Abel, standing near in momentary idleness, grins a greeting to the tanner as he passes on towards home.

The squeezed-up building in the corner of the market-place, that was once Stirling's Bank, has just been what is technically termed "done up." The windows that we once saw closely shuttered, and staring blankly with sightless eyes at the tumult of humanity that surged below, are now bright with plate-glass panes, bearing imposing announcements in gilt letters, that shimmer in the sun.

The ivy is gone from the wide low chimney, whence issued that mist of pale blue smoke, veiling the stars. All things are brisk and new about the renovated building, and the lurking door leading into Church Lane has long been bricked up.

Now Amos and Bess are laughing to see Emily holding the baby up on weakling legs, making believe that it can walk across the stones to meet its grandad.

Jake is whistling the last new chapel tune, as he goes on briskly with his work.

A lark's song bubbles over like a fountain of melody in the cloudless sky overhead. Jake's pigeons are preening themselves and cooing on the red tiled roof.

Let us pass on to the meadows, and so meet Cuthbert Deane and Alicia, who are coming down that way from the church.

We do but follow in the wake of Davey, as he hurries eagerly along in the same direction, taking off his hat and waving it

on catching sight of the two figures emerging from the shadow cast by the belt of beech-trees that edge the churchyard.

Soon the three stand in a group, and Alicia is smiling her sympathy with Davey's eagerness. Things have gone well with Davey since we saw him last. Life for him is full of fair new hopes. It is as full of promise as the hawthorn-tree before The Safe Retreat is full of buds. Has he then forgotten that first love of his, sweet Hilda of the violet eyes and gentle voice? Not he!

The man or woman who has once been loved is never quite the same as any other to the heart that has cherished them. An echo of the old music ever lingers about the name that has once been graven there. Hence, to Davey, Hilda was ever a sacred and tender memory, and he held the knowledge of her happiness as something infinitely precious. He knew that when the "desire of the heart" had become a living reality, no sorrow could ever, for her, be beyond comfort, so long as her husband was by her side. And, knowing this to be so, he thanked Heaven that through troubled waters and an angry sea she had reached at last the haven where she would be. For himself, a great-niece of old Anthony's had come to make her home with that worthy man and his good wife, and Davey's zeal in visiting the old couple, and reading to Anthony, whose sight was failing, was in very truth a touching sight.

The oftener he went, the more he was convinced that life was full of beautiful things and sweet surprises, of which neither the least beautiful, nor the least wonderful, was the growing conviction that there lived a woman, young and fair, who could love David Robin in spite of there being "summat wrong wi' him;" that a woman's tender eyes could look beyond the awkward gait and heavy shoulders, and read a welcome story in the eyes, which, if graver and more wistful than those of other men, were also more tender.

But we are wandering from the little group of three gathered together in the light of the spring sunshine, amid the daisies and buttercups that are trying their best to hide the grass.

The vicar's wife has taken a letter from Davey's hand, opened it, and is tantalising the other two by keeping its contents to herself, while first smiling, and then—not quite, but almost—crying over it.

"How are things going with them?" says the vicar. "Is Ralph pleased to hear

that the site for the hospital is secured at last?"

"He is very much pleased about everything," says Alicia, with a roguish triumph in the eyes that look at her husband over the edge of Ralph's letter. "He likes his Australian home more and more every day, and he is getting on with his farming marvellously well. Mrs. Prettyman, too, is becoming convinced that the New World is better than the Old, and has expressed a wish to lay her bones there."

"And Mrs. Stirling," says Davey. "What news of her?"

"The best," says Alicia, and this time there can be no doubt as to the tears that rise to her eyes. "There is a baby—a little baby-girl, and they have called it—Hester."

TEMPERANCE.

THE tide that doubtless exists in the affairs of men, moved by influences that are perhaps far beyond our ken, and whose restless sway is felt in fashions, beliefs, and habits that vary with the changing moon; this tide seems in one important point—the drinking customs of society—to have made its mark—high gin-and-water mark you might call it—and decidedly to show signs of retiring. There are waves of feeling that pass over masses of people; one age has its enthusiasm, another its cynicism; and such an undulation is now felt in the matter of temperance. It cannot be ignored or overlooked, there is evidence of it in the streets; and with every knot of men you meet the subject is discussed in quite a different fashion to that of a few years ago. And yet we were accustomed to plume ourselves upon a relatively high degree of temperance. There were no three bottle men as in the days of our forefathers; we had renounced their strong and heady potations, and yet it will be found that for strong, solid, level drinking, everybody going into the business with a will, old and young, men and women, the devout and the dissolute, the past half century will hold its own with any other that has gone before. Other things have gone up and down, industries have developed and decayed, whole classes have swayed between wealth and ruin, but fickle fortune has proved constant to the purveyors of drink, and publicans have thriven in comfortable prosperity. The public revenue, too, has taken a lion's

share; we have drunk ourselves through costly wars and heavy expenditures. But the reaction has come at last—whether temporary or of a lasting nature, who can tell? Anyhow the Customs and Excise both tell the tale, and officials begin to ask in alarm, if all the world should turn sober what will become of the revenue?

That too was the question asked the other night at the usual symposium held at The Dunbarton Castle, a highly respectable suburban tavern; no formal meeting, you will understand, but people happen to drop in. Some people have happened to drop in any and every night for a score of years—the fathers of the suburb these, who talk of the green fields which used to spread around. To the bustling thoroughfare with its constant stream of cabs and omnibuses the house presents a brilliant-lighted front, and its swing doors are constantly on the move, as a mingled crowd throng about its zinc-covered counters. It is a well-conducted house, mind you, and when its customers have clearly overshot the boundary mark of sobriety, they are inexorably marched out into the street, to flounder helplessly in the stream of traffic or to catch the commiserating eye of the nearest policeman. For there is a vigilant eye over everything that goes on at the Castle—the master's eye—the eye, that is, of our respectable Boniface, our patriotic vestryman, who with his stern and vigilant watchfulness upon the public bar, has a softer and more benevolent aspect for his guests in the little parlour. But when the statistical young man, who is connected with the local press, moots the question about the revenue, and rallies the landlord upon the falling off in the consumption of stimulants, Boniface shows a contemptuous indifference to the subject. A fine thing to make a fuss over, a falling off of one per cent. or so, due to bad harvests and the want of hot weather to make people thirsty!

"But then," urged the statistician, "the returns ought to increase with the increase of population."

"Hold hard there," cried the landlord, "let us talk plain, if you please. What does increase of population mean? Babies, don't it?"

"Quite so," was the general affirmation.

"Well, they ain't reared on beer and gin, not as a rule. They're fed on milk. So what has increase of population got to do with us publicans?"

It was difficult to say. The statistical

man could not see his way. He seemed to feel a fallacy somewhere at the tips of his fingers, but not so as to be able to collar it, and bring it to light. And then our landlord seems so confident in his position. As for any permanent falling off in the consumption of drink, he is quite at ease upon that point. As to the more genteel part of his business, he owns to a falling off there. The symposium is no longer so well attended as it used to be. And, indeed, our landlord has confided to some of his customers that he only keeps up the institution for the sake of a few old customers, who would be quite stranded and lost if deprived of their nightly harbour of refuge. It does not pay, he says, to encourage people to sit and talk—let them swallow their drink and march out. Of one thing he is confident—as long as the working-men get good wages, a fair percentage of the money will come to him. In a general way, you may take this at fifteen per cent. When a man earns a pound a week, he feels himself entitled to three shillings out of it for spending-money; the rest goes to his wife for the support of the family, many or few—that is not a matter which concerns him at all. And spending-money goes inevitably in drink. Now, out of these three shillings a week thus spent, two at least go in profits to the publicans and brewers and distillers, with whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer stands in, so to say. Perhaps the latter takes half the two shillings, and in that case the workman's contribution to the exchequer represents five per cent. of his income. Now, if there were any widespread sympathetic movement that would take the working-man out of his drinking habits and land him on a different platform—well, Boniface would be ruined, no doubt. But what would also become of not a few other institutions which are dependent upon the public revenue?

But our landlord is not in the least alarmed, any more than the lark who had built her nest in the corn. The working-man has not stirred as yet—it is the friends and neighbours who are running about and shouting, and processioning, and putting on blue ribbons.

But our landlord leaves one important element out of his calculation. The mass of people who are his customers now will continue to be his customers to the end of the chapter. But how about the recruits? It is a cheering feature in the latter-day aspect of our large towns that the young

ones coming on among the working classes are of a distinctly better and more cultivated type than their predecessors, likely to be much cleaner in language and more temperate in habits. Education is doing its work, and the coming race promises fair to shake off the nation's vice. A cheering prospect indeed for the philanthropist, but for the Chancellor of the Exchequer rather a dismal one.

"Where are my lost millions?" he may soon be in a position to exclaim. Perhaps, indeed, he may find some compensation in the increased consumption of tea and coffee. For, concurrent with the falling off in spirits—which is only one per cent. on the annual consumption of about thirty million gallons, a fact remarkable in its tendency, as showing a beginning of reaction, but not, so far, a serious financial loss—concurrent with this is a great increase in the importation of tea, which has risen from, roughly, a hundred and fifty-nine million pounds in 1881, to a hundred and sixty-five million pounds in 1882. The consumption of cocoa, too, has risen ten per cent. in the same period, to an annual consumption in 1882 of about twelve million pounds—a fact not surprising to those who have travelled about London in the early hours of the morning and have seen the rush of the working-men and the early-breakfast people generally upon the cocoa-cans. Coffee, on the other hand, is stationary. Nor is this to be wondered at, seeing, or rather tasting and smelling, the vile stuff that is purveyed as coffee in the so-called coffee-houses and Coffee-Palaces. For to excel in coffee requires forethought and skill in the matter of preparing the berry, and delicate manipulation in the making of it, and it cannot be made successfully in large quantities; while tea and cocoa lend themselves to rough-and-ready processes. But, anyhow, the increased consumption of these two temperance beverages shows pretty clearly that the falling off in spirits is not due to diminished spending powers in the people at large, but rather to a change of taste and habit.

In wine again, the falling off in consumption is remarkable, if placed in contrast with a steady increase, year after year, up to the year of grace 1876, when the consumption reached its highest total of about eighteen millions and a half of gallons—high-wine mark that deserves to be marked upon the doorposts of the Treasury chambers, as exceptionally high tides are marked on river piers and bridges. From

that date a gradual decline has set in, with the result of landing us in the past year in a consumption of only some fourteen million gallons. Something of this falling off is due, perhaps, to a distaste for wine as a beverage, brought about by a general deterioration in quality, and by the enormous adulteration of which wine is the subject. But there is also a change in the social habits of the wealthier classes. Instead of the popping of champagne corks, we have the fizzing of mineral waters. The hospitable suppers where wine and wit flowed freely, are things of the past; the balls of other days, when the fair dancers refreshed themselves so freely with sparkling wines, are succeeded by Cinderella parties, where nothing is provided beyond tea and lemonade.

Perhaps this is not all pure gain. It is difficult to believe that some of the zest of social intercourse will not be lost when wine no longer thaws the icy crust that keeps people apart. There is a want of genial warmth in the notion of life from which the cheerful glass and flowing bowl shall be entirely banished. Dyspepsia and morbid melancholy seem to wait upon the hard-worker, and often the power of enjoyment is wanting without the help of stimulants, and in that way, how much better is the social glass than the solitary dose—of laudanum perhaps, of chloral, or other fatal dram, with their heavenly moments incomparably more enticing than the commonplace cheerfulness of alcohol: heavenly moments to be purchased by speedy irretrievable ruin of body and soul.

But apart from the general movement of opinion, no doubt the teetotalers and their movement have something to do with the falling off in the revenue from drink. Half a century ago the very name of them was unknown, and the word abstainer, which is the more popular term—a man rarely describes himself by the lengthier title, but shortly as a 'bstainer—conveyed no particular meaning. Even now to the intelligent foreigner the whole business is something of a mystery. "Not to drink wine and alcohol—very good, if it so pleases you, but to make a 'cause' of it, to have meetings, speeches, processions, banners—mais!" and he dismisses the whole affair with a shrug. But at home one feels that the question must be treated seriously. The "pledge" is really a barrier to many a man between his better self and his worse—a contract registered in heaven which he is bound to keep. And this belief of

his carries him over the dead points of his new course, the moments when the craving for the accustomed dram grows almost overpowering.

But the cause does not content itself with reclaiming drunken men, it tries to enlist the children, and it would be difficult to say how many organisations there are in the country, Rechabites, Templars, and so on, which enroll the poor bairns from a tender age, when their temptations are rather to an excess in tea and buns, and administer the potent pledge. The result is often disappointing when the child grows up, and comes in contact with the world; but in other cases a kind of fanaticism is produced, which recalls the early fervency of Islam. "The sword or the pledge" would be the war-cry of many of these warriors. But all these more ancient societies have paled before the sun of the army, the Blue Ribbon Army, which has somehow caught the popular taste. Here is recruiting made easy, no swearing-in, no medical test, but the youth has only to endure a pretty pair of hands, perhaps, twiddling about the breast of his coat, and presto! the thing is done—the blue ribbon is pinned on, the man is enrolled. Altogether there is something charmingly human about the process, and when once the badge is assumed, its obligations seem to be a matter of honour. It won't do for the seasoned old reprobates, who require something more solemn and awe-inspiring, something to frighten them out of their broken old boots; but for young people, with their sympathies and vanities, there is nothing like the blue ribbon.

And about the revenue? is asked of a local prophet of the faith, who works round the neighbourhood selling petroleum by day, and at night and on Sundays is a fervid lecturer and preacher. "When you have made everybody a 'bstainer, and knocked off twenty millions or so, what will the Government do then?"

"Well," replied the man, "I'll tell you a little story now. There was once a chap, an American, I fancy, bragging about his country, and, says he, 'Why, in our country, the bees is as big as turkey-cocks is here.' 'Hallo,' says his friend; 'and about the hives—how big is they?' 'Oh,' says the other, 'I don't know as they're any bigger than ordinary.' 'Then how do the bees get in?' 'Well,' says the 'Merican, a little huffed, 'I guess that's their look-out.' And that's what I should say to the Government about the revenue."

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXI. HARRY ANNESLEY IS
ACCEPTED.

SHE knew that Harry Annesley was at the door. He had written to say that he must come again, though he had fixed no day for his coming. She had been delighted to think that he should come, though she had, after her fashion, scolded him for the promised visit. But, though his comings had not been frequent, she recognised already the sounds of his advent. When a girl really loves her lover, the very atmosphere tells of his whereabouts. She was expecting him with almost breathless expectation when her cousin Mountjoy was brought to her; and so was her mother, who had been told that Harry Annesley had business on which he intended to call. But now the two foes must meet in her presence. That was the idea which first came upon her. She was sure that Harry would behave well. Why should not a favoured lover on such occasions always behave well? But how would Mountjoy conduct himself, when brought face to face with his rival? As Florence thought of it, she remembered that on one occasion the quarrel between them had been outrageous. And Mountjoy had been the sinner, while Harry had been made to bear the punishment of the sin.

Harry, when he was told that Miss Mountjoy was at home, had at once walked in and opened for himself the door of the front room downstairs. There he found Florence and Mountjoy Scarborough. Mrs. Mountjoy was still upstairs in her bedroom, and was palpitating with fear, as she thought of the anger of the two combative lovers. To her belief, Harry was, of the two, the more like to a roaring lion, because she had heard of him that he had roared so dreadfully on that former occasion. But she did not instantly go down, being detained in her bedroom by the eagerness of her fear, and by the necessity of resolving how she would behave when she got there.

Harry, when he entered, stood a moment at the door, and then, hurrying across the room, offered Scarborough his hand. "I have been so sorry," he said, "to hear of your loss; but your father's health was such that you could not have expected that his life should be prolonged." Mountjoy muttered something, but his mutterings, as Florence had observed, were made in courtesy. And the two men had taken

each other by the hand; after that they could hardly fly at each other's throats in her presence. Then Harry crossed to Florence, and took her hand. "I never get a line from you," he said, laughing, "but what you scold me. I think I escape better when I am present; so here I am."

"You always make wicked propositions, and of course I scold you. A girl has to go on scolding till she's married, and then it's her turn to get it."

"No wonder, then, that you talk of three years so glibly; I want to be able to scold you."

All this was going on in Mountjoy's presence, while he stood by, silent, black, and scowling. His position was very difficult,—that of hearing the billing and cooing of these lovers. But theirs also was not too easy, which made the billing and cooing necessary in his presence. Each had to seem to be natural, but the billing and cooing were in truth affected. Had he not been there, would they not have been in each other's arms? and would she not have made him the proudest man in England by a loving kiss? "I was asking Miss Mountjoy, when you came in, to be my wife." This Scarborough said with a loud voice, looking Harry full in the face.

"It cannot be," said Florence; "I told you that, for his honour," and she laid her hand on Harry's arm, "I could listen to no such request."

"The request has to be made again," he said.

"It will be made in vain," said Harry.

"So no doubt you think," said Captain Scarborough.

"You can ask herself," said Harry.

"Of course it will be made in vain," said Florence. "Does he think that a girl in such a matter as that of loving a man can be turned here and there at a moment's notice, that she can say yes and no alternately to two men? It is impossible. Harry Annesley has chosen me, and I am infinitely happy in his choice." Here Harry made an attempt to get his arm round her waist, in which, however, she prevented him, seeing the angry passion rising in her cousin's eyes. "He is to be my husband, I hope. I have told him that I love him—and I tell you so also. He has my promise, and I cannot take it back without perjury to him, and ruin—absolute ruin to myself. All my happiness in this world depends on him. He is to me my own, one absolute master, to whom I have given myself altogether, as far as this world goes."

Even were he to reject me I could not give myself to another."

"My Florence! my darling!" he cried.

"After I have told you so much, can you ask your cousin to be untrue to her word and to her heart—and to become your wife when her heart is utterly within his keeping? Mountjoy, it is impossible."

"What of me then?" he said.

"Rouse yourself and love some other girl, and marry her, and so do well with yourself and with your property."

"You talk of your heart," he said, "and you bid me use my own after such fashion as that!"

"A man's heart can be changed, but not a woman's. His love is but one thing among many."

"It is the one thing," said Harry. Then the door opened, and Mrs. Mountjoy entered the room.

"Oh dear, oh dear," she said, "you both here together!"

"Yes; we are both here," said Harry.

There was an unfortunate smile on his face as he said so, which made Mountjoy Scarborough very angry. The two men were both handsome, two as handsome men as you shall see on a summer's day. Mountjoy was dark-visaged, with coal-black whiskers and moustache, with sparkling angry eyes, and every feature of his face well cut and finely formed. But there was absent from him all look of contentment or satisfaction. Harry was light-haired, with long silken beard, and bright eyes, but there was usually present to his face a look of infinite joy, which was comfortable to all beholders. If not strong, as was the other man's, it was happy and eloquent of good-temper. But in one thing they were alike—neither of them counted aught on his good looks. Mountjoy had attempted to domineer by his bad temper, and had failed; but Harry, without any attempt at domineering, always doubting of himself till he had been assured of success by her lips, had succeeded. Now he was very proud of his success; but he was proud of her, and not of himself.

"You come in here and boast of what you have done, in my presence," said Mountjoy Scarborough.

"How can I not seem to boast when she tells me that she loves me?" said Harry.

"For Heaven's sake do not quarrel here," said Mrs. Mountjoy.

"They shall not quarrel at all," said Florence. "There is no cause for quarrel-

ling. When a girl has given herself away there should be an end of it. No man who knows that she has done so should speak to her again in the way of love. I will leave you now; but, Harry—you must come again, in order that I may tell you that you must not have it all your own way, sir." Then she gave him her hand, and passing on at once to Mountjoy, tendered her hand to him also. "You are my cousin, and the head now of my mother's family. I would fain know that you would say a kind word to me and bid me 'God speed.'"

He looked at her, but did not take her hand. "I cannot do it," he said. "I cannot bid you 'God speed.' You have ruined me, trampled upon me, destroyed me. I am not angry with him," and he pointed across the room to Harry Annesley; "nor with you; but only with myself." Then, without speaking a word to his aunt, he marched out of the room, and left the house, closing the front door after him with a loud noise, which testified to his anger.

"He has gone," said Mrs. Mountjoy, with a tone of deep tragedy.

"It is better so," said Florence.

"A man must take his chance in such warfare as this," said Harry. "There is something about Mountjoy Scarborough that, after all, I like. I do not love Augustus, but with certain faults Mountjoy is a good fellow."

"He is the head of our family," said Mrs. Mountjoy, "and is the owner of Tretton."

"That has nothing to do with it," said Florence.

"It has much to do with it," said her mother, "though you would never listen to me. I had set my heart upon it, but you have determined to thwart me. And yet there was a time when you preferred him to anyone else."

"Never," said Florence with energy.

"Yes; you did—before Mr. Annesley here came in the way."

"It was before I came, at any rate," said Harry.

"I was young, and I did not wish to be disobedient. But I never loved him, and I never told him so. Now it is out of the question."

"He will never come back again," said Mrs. Mountjoy mournfully.

"I should be very glad to see him back when I and Florence are man and wife. I don't care how soon we should see him."

"No; he will never come back," said Florence;—"not as he came to-day. That trouble is at last over, mamma."

"And my trouble is going to begin!"

"Why should there be any trouble? Harry will not give you trouble;—will you, Harry?"

"Never, I trust," said Harry.

"He cannot understand," said Mrs. Mountjoy; "he knows nothing of the desire and ambition of my life. I had promised him my child, and my word to him is now broken."

"He will have known, mamma, that you could not promise for me. Now go, Harry, because we are flurried. May I not ask him to come here to-night and drink tea with us?" This she said, addressing her mother in a tone of sweetest entreaty. To this Mrs. Mountjoy unwillingly yielded, and then Harry also took his departure.

Florence was aware that she had gained much by the interview of the morning. Even to her it began to appear unnecessary that she should keep Harry waiting three years. She had spoken of postponing the time of her servitude and of preserving for herself the masterdom of her own condition. But in that respect the truth of her own desires was well understood by them all. She was anxious enough to submit to her new master, and now she felt that the time was coming. Her mother had yielded so much, and Mountjoy had yielded. Harry was saying to himself at this very moment that Mountjoy had thrown up the sponge. She, too, was declaring the same thing for her own comfort in less sporting phraseology; and, what was much more to her, her mother had nearly thrown up the sponge also. In the worst days of her trouble any suitor had made himself welcome to her mother who would rescue her child from the fangs of that roaring lion, Harry Annesley. Mr. Anderson had been received with open arms, and even M. Grascour. Mrs. Mountjoy had then got it into her head that of all lions which were about in those days Harry roared the loudest. His sins in regard to leaving poor Mountjoy speechless and motionless on the pavement had filled her with horror. But Florence now felt that all that had come to an end. Not only had Mountjoy gone away, but no mention would probably be ever again made of Anderson or Grascour. When Florence was preparing herself for tea that evening she sang a little song to herself as to the coming of the conquering hero. "A man must take his chance in such warfare as this," she said, repeating to herself her lover's words.

"You can't expect me to be very bright," her mother said to her before Harry came.

There was a sign of yielding in this also; but Florence in her happiness did not wish to make her mother miserable. "Why not be bright, mamma? Don't you know that Harry is good?"

"No. How am I to know anything about him? He may be utterly penniless."

"But his uncle has offered to let us live in the house and to give us an income. Mr. Prosper has abandoned all idea of getting married."

"He can be married any day. And why do you want to live in another man's house when you may live in your own? Tretton is ready for you; the finest mansion in the whole county." Here Mrs. Mountjoy exaggerated a little, but some exaggerations may be allowed in such circumstances.

"Mamma, you know that I cannot live at Tretton."

"It is the house in which I was born."

"How can that signify? When such things happen they are used as additional grounds for satisfaction. But I cannot marry your nephew because you were born in a certain house. And all that is over now; you know that Mountjoy will not come back again."

"He would," exclaims the mother, as though with new hopes.

"Oh, mamma, how can you talk like that? I mean to marry Harry Annesley. You know that I do. Why not make your own girl happy by accepting him?" Then Mrs. Mountjoy left the room and went to her own chamber and cried there, not bitterly, I think, but copiously. Her girl would be the wife of the Squire of Buston, who, after all, was not a bad sort of fellow. At any rate he would not gamble. There had always been that terrible drawback. And he was a fellow of his college, in which she would look for and probably would find some compensation as to Tretton. When, therefore, she came down to tea, she was able to receive Harry, not with joy, but at least without rebuke.

Conversation was at first somewhat flat between the trio. If the old lady could have been induced to remain upstairs, Harry felt that the evening would have been much more satisfactory. But as it was, he found himself enabled to make some progress. He at once began to address Florence as his undoubted future spouse, very slyly using words adapted for that purpose; and she, without any outburst of her intention,—as she had made when

discussing the matter with her cousin,—answered him in the same spirit, and by degrees came so to talk as though the matter were entirely settled. And then, at last, that future day was absolutely brought upon the tapis as though now to be named.

"Three years!" ejaculated Mrs. Mountjoy, as though not even yet surrendering her last hope.

Florence, from the nature of the circumstances, received this in silence. Had it been ten years she might have expostulated. But a young lady's bashfulness was bound to appear satisfied with an assurance of marriage within three years. But it was otherwise with Harry. "Good gracious, Mrs. Mountjoy, we shall all be dead," he cried out.

Mrs. Mountjoy showed by her countenance that she was quite shocked. "Oh, Harry," said Florence, "none of us, I hope, will be dead in three years."

"I shall be a great deal too old to be married, if I am left alive. Three months, you mean. It will be just the proper time of year, which does go for something. And three months is always supposed to be long enough to allow a girl to get her new frocks."

"You know nothing about it, Harry," said Florence. And so the matter was discussed,—in such a manner that when Harry took his departure that evening he was half inclined to sing a song of himself about the conquering hero. "Dear mamma," said Florence, kissing her mother with all the warm, clinging affection of former years. It was very pleasant, but still Mrs. Mountjoy went to her room with a sad heart.

When there she sat for a while over the fire, and then drew out her desk. She had been beaten—absolutely beaten, and it was necessary that she should own so much in writing to one person. So she wrote her letter, which was as follows:

"DEAR MOUNTJOY,—After all it cannot be as I would have had it. As they say, 'Man proposes, but God disposes.' I would have given her to you now, and would even yet have trusted that you would have treated her well, had it not been that Mr. Annesley has gained such a hold upon her affections. She is wilful, as you are, and I cannot bend her. It has been the longing of my heart that you two should live together at Tretton. But such longings are, I think, wicked, and are seldom realised.

"I write now just this one line to tell you that it is all settled. I have not been strong enough to prevent such a settling. He talks of three months. But what does it matter? Three months or three years will be the same to you, and nearly the same to me.—Your affectionate aunt,

"SARAH MOUNTJOY.

"P.S.—May I as your loving aunt add one word of passionate entreaty? All Tretton is yours now, and the honour of Tretton is within your keeping. Do not go back to those wretched tables!"

Mountjoy Scarborough when he received this letter cannot be said to have been made unhappy by it, because he had already known all his unhappiness. But he turned it in his mind, as though to think what would now be the best course of life open to him. And he did think that he had better go back to those tables against which his aunt had warned him, and there remain till he had made the acres of Tretton utterly disappear. There was nothing for him which seemed to be better. And here at home in England even that would at present be impossible to him. He could not enter the clubs, and elsewhere Samuel Hart would be ever at his heels. And there was his brother with his lawsuit—though on that matter a compromise had already been offered to him. Augustus had proposed to him by his lawyer to share Tretton. He would never share Tretton. His brother should have an income secured to him, but he would keep Tretton in his own hands—as long as the gambling-tables would allow him.

He was in truth a wretched man, as on that night he did make up his mind, and, ringing his bell, called his servant out of his bed to bid him prepare everything for a sudden start. He would leave Tretton on the following day, or on the day after, and intended at once to go abroad. "He is off for that place nigh to Italy where they have the gambling-tables," said the butler on the following morning to the valet who declared his master's intentions.

"I shouldn't wonder, Mr. Stokes," said the valet; "I'm told it's a beautiful country, and I should like to see a little of that sort of life myself." Alas, alas! within a week from that time Captain Scarborough might have been seen seated in the Monte Carlo room, without any friendly Samuel Hart to stand over him and guard him.

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER CUDLIP).

CHAPTER II. THE BRIDE AT EASE.

A DOZEN voices were raised in explanation, consolation, suggestion, sympathy; but the sorely-smitten family never heeded one of them. The children pressed forward to their mother, and with all their gentle force bore her away to her own room, where the silence, and the thought that he would never share it with her again, fell upon her mercifully like a blow, and rendered her unconscious.

"Better so," Jenifer said to Jack, who was unversed in the doctrine of the "blessed balm" of unconsciousness; "she'll come out of this fainting-fit so exhausted that she must sleep, and when she wakes she'll be stronger to bear everything. Oh, Jack! and an hour ago we thought Hubert's marriage a trouble!"

Heavily laden as was Jack's heart for his father, he could not help feeling that Hubert's marriage might turn out a trouble to them all yet; for, young as he was, he knew a good deal about the intended distribution of the property. He knew, that is to say, that the land was all to fall to Hubert's lot, and that his own share of the invested capital would not be very large after his mother and sister had been portioned. But this was not the thought that stung him. He was young and thoughtless, everyone who knew him said. But he was as unselfish as his sister, and as devoted to his mother as if he had never realised that Hubert was her favourite son.

With his face swollen with crying he went down presently, to have his father's corpse moved out of the way of his brother's bride; and, as he stood there in

the hall giving broken directions amidst his sobs, the carriage drew up at the door with the newly-married pair.

Hubert leapt into the house at once, ardent, expectant, half ashamed of himself, and yet full of pride in the wife who was calmly awaiting her reception in the carriage outside.

"What! no father and mother, and no Jenifer to welcome us!" he cried in surprise; and then he saw Jack's face, and knew in an instant that some tragedy had just been enacted.

In a few words the younger brother put the elder one in possession of so many of the facts as he was acquainted with himself, and while they were still speaking in disjointed sentences and broken tones, Mrs. Hubert Ray sprang out of the carriage into the hall, and stood before them, looking strangely bright and indifferent in that house of horror.

"What is it, Hugh?" she asked in a ringing high-pitched voice; "have we come to the wrong house, or haven't your people got the telegram? I detest——"

Then her husband checked her, telling her, gently and gradually, and with far more consideration than was needful, that his father was dead.

"How awkward—I mean how dreadful!" she said quickly, and then she drew her long seal-skin cloak more closely round her, and turned to warm her feet at the wood fire which was burning cheerfully through all the misery at the end of the hall.

Looking at her as she stood there, one tiny foot stretched out to catch the full force of the bright blaze, the figure slightly thrown back to maintain its equilibrium, and the face averted to save it from getting scorched, Jack and the others who beheld her for the first time saw a most attractive young lady.

Slim to a point of slimness that might almost be called attenuation, not tall, but giving the impression of good height by reason of her extraordinarily erect and graceful carriage; fair, with a white fairness that would always render hers a remarkable face in a country in which the rose predominates over the lily; with no feature worth mentioning for its goodness, save her eyes. But these most distinctly were worth mentioning. Blue, cold, and bright as steel, they had a fixity of purpose in their steady, unflinching gaze that rarely failed to find out whatever she wanted to have revealed.

On the present occasion, after carefully warming her right foot, she altered her position in favour of the left, and let those eyes of hers "straight at" her young brother-in-law.

"When I am quite warm I shall be able to think about what it will be best to do," she said in clear, ringing tones. Then, as he drew nearer and tried to say something civil through his sobs, poor boy, she added: "Hugh having vanished——"

"He has gone up to my mother and sister."

"Exactly. Well, as he has vanished, I am thrown on myself—and you. You're Jack, I know. Hugh has told me about you and your good nature. I wish you could find out if my room is ready? If it's not, I think I'll go back to an hotel in Exeter."

As she spoke Hubert came back with his sister hanging on his arm, and Mrs. Hubert withdrew her foot from the fire, stood a trifle more erect, and, with unruffled mien, waited for the introduction that was imminent.

"You two are sisters now, and must love one another like sisters," Hubert said with a faint assumption of hope that such might be the case. Whereat his wife smiled politely, gave her hand to Jenifer for an instant, and then resumed her occupation of warming her feet.

"They get so cold travelling," she said apologetically; "so cold, that often when I come in I won't speak to anyone."

"Mother can't see you yet," Jenifer said, shivering. "Will you take her love and good wishes from me?"

"Oh yes," Mrs. Hubert said affably. "Will you tell her from me that I feel it to be very distressing and awkward that I should have come just at this time, but you see I couldn't know what was going to happen, could I?"

"Oh, no one could know! Oh, my father—my father!" Jenifer wept out in a fresh burst of anguish.

"And even now no one tells me what has happened," Mrs. Hubert went on, waxing impatient, for she was getting very tired of standing in the hall of the house that she regarded as her own now. "I am so tired. Travelling always makes me cold, and it's horrid, when one is cold and tired, to have to stand about in one's travelling-things. Hubert, do see if my things are taken to my room. You stand there gaping as if I didn't exist. What would Flora think of you if she saw the way you were carrying out her strict injunctions to take care of me?"

She smiled, and spoke with an air of jocularly that was strangely out of place in that house of mourning, and Jenifer stole a pitying glance at her brother as she listened.

But Hubert looked neither hurt nor angry. He was evidently accustomed to regard his wife as a being of supreme importance.

"Dinner is—when did you say?" Mrs. Hubert asked, as Mrs. Ray's own maid appeared with lighted candle to conduct the bride to her room.

Mrs. Hubert addressed Jenifer, but Jenifer had endured to the utmost, and this was the last straw.

"Whenever you please to order it for yourself. We Rays have not much appetite for dinner."

"Oh, I'm a Ray too, for that matter," Mrs. Hubert said lightly, as her sister-in-law swept past her and out of the hall in a torrent of tears and wrath.

"I suppose I needn't dress?" Mrs. Hubert said to Chalmers, the maid, when she reached the state-bedroom which had been prepared for her with care, under Mrs. Ray's loving superintendence.

"I suppose you will do as you please, ma'am," Chalmers replied with hardly-sustained self-control.

Her hands were trembling as she unfastened Mrs. Hubert's travelling-trunks; but full as her heart was of woe for the calamity that had come upon the house, she would not let a tear fall before this well-tempered bit of steel who had come to be the young mistress at Moor Royal.

"It's so awkward this having happened to-night," Mrs. Hubert soliloquised discontentedly. "One doesn't know what to do. I didn't know the old gentleman, you see," she added, again addressing Chalmers,

"and so it would be silly of me to pretend to be sorry, wouldn't it? You wouldn't be sorry if you hadn't known him, now would you?"

"I should grieve for the great sorrow that has come upon his wife and children," Chalmers said, gasping with grief and rage.

"But you see I don't know his wife, and the only one of his children whom I know is Mr. Hubert—Mr. Ray, I mean; so it's rather hard on me that I should have to put up with anything on this first night of my coming home. Put away those dresses; it makes me quite ill to see that velvet I meant to wear to-night. I shall get into a dressing-gown and have my dinner brought to me here. Get me the newspapers and all the magazines that we brought down with us, and don't let any one come near me but yourself and Mr. Ray."

"I am Mrs. Ray's maid, ma'am, and shall not be able to leave my mistress to wait on you."

"How tiresome! I can't have anything I want! What a wretched coming home! Go! go as soon as you like, and ask Mr. Ray to come to me; tell him my head is aching terribly, and that I'm as uncomfortable as can be, and that things are not at all as he promised me they should be."

The young lady was arraying herself in a white cashmere dressing-gown, trimmed richly with white lace, which fell around her in soft snowy folds, as she spoke. All her movements were soft, undulating, and graceful, and it must have been a fastidious eye indeed that did not rest on her with pleasure. Nevertheless, Chalmers recoiled from her, called her "a white cat" privately, and went off to seek Mr. Hubert, with the firm conviction in her mind that he had done an ill-deed in marrying and bringing home this fashionable-looking white witch.

Meantime, Hubert and Jenifer had been having that trying thing—a first interview after the first breach of trust.

"There is no thought of its being other than an accident, is there?" he asked anxiously, speaking of his father's death.

"Oh, Hubert, no! don't even ask that of our father; his foot must have caught in the brambles on the top of the hedge, and in the fall he must have struggled, and the gun went off as he fell, Jack says, for it was not in his hand when he was found."

"Jenifer, my darling sister, this seems

like a judgment on me for having married the dearest girl in the world, unknown to all of you."

"The judgment has fallen on us too Hubert; you mustn't take all that to yourself, any more than you can take all the sorrow."

"It's awful to me to think that my father should never have seen my wife."

"He never even knew that you had one; he was out all day, and—and mother and I had to bear it all alone."

"You mean the news of my marriage?"

Jenifer nodded.

"I was afraid you'd all be staggered by the telegram; but, Flora—she's Effie's sister—is a great hand for doing things off sharply. She's a charming woman, you'll like her immensely if she only takes to you, and she's sure to do that, Jenny, for you're the sweetest and prettiest creature in the world; but she's impulsive to a degree, and somehow or other, when one's with her, one's hurried on to do everything she suggests. If it hadn't been for her I should never have had the pluck to propose a sudden secret marriage to Effie, for Effie was engaged to someone else, you know; but Flora—Mrs. Jarvoise—told me in confidence that if I didn't marry Effie straight off the reel without giving her time to think, that I should lose her altogether. Say something, Jenny dear; it's not like you to withhold sympathy from me. Say something about her; she's one of those charming girls who get so worshipped that they seem a little spoilt sometimes, but in reality she is capable of sacrificing herself to any extent for those she loves; see how she has sacrificed herself for me."

"I can only—I mean, I hope she will make you happy," Jenifer said piteously. "Don't ask me to say more to-night, Hubert. My head and heart are both burning. This is our first trouble, and you are not sharing it with us as you would have done. Oh, Hubert, forgive me! Everything is too hard to-night."

"Never mind, dear," he said forgivingly, wiping his own eyes, and moving his sister to deeper remorse by the sight of his emotion; "never mind, dear. It's a little hard on poor Effie that through this dreadful misery she should be made to feel herself in the way; but she's not one to make a fuss about things."

"If you please, sir," Chalmers said, coming up at this juncture, "Mrs. Hubert's

love to you, and her head is aching horribly, and she's as uncomfortable as she can be, and will you go to her at once?"

"Poor Effie!" her husband exclaimed despairingly, as he hurried from the room to see after his bride's well-being.

In a minute more Jenifer was in her mother's room. The blessed stage of unconsciousness was long past, and the bereaved woman, with every sense keenly on the alert, was sitting by the fire, not so much for the sake of the warmth as because in its fiery caverns she seemed to see pictures of her past happy life.

The picture the flames painted most vividly was the one of her home-coming as a bride. How joyful and bright all had been at Moor Royal that day! And now he who had brought her home and made all the joyfulness and brightness was lying dead, and their eldest son had brought home his bride, and gained nothing but a cold welcome for her.

Her thoughts were dwelling on this as Jenifer came in, and in an instant the daughter saw that there was some mental stimulant at work in her mother.

"I was stunned just now, Jenifer, and hardly understood that I was refusing to see my new daughter. Let Hubert bring her to me now. We can learn to love one another as well in sorrow as in joy," she said as Jenifer came and knelt before her.

"You are sure you can stand it, mother darling? You are sure you won't put yourself to more pain by the exertion?"

The widow shook her head.

"It will please Hubert, and what have I to live for but to please my children?"

"That's no new thing; you have done that all our lives," Jenifer said, rising up and kissing her mother's hands in a paroxysm of love and pity.

Then she steadied and collected herself, and, half fearing how her mission would be met, went away in search of her brother and his wife.

When she reached the door and knocked, what she heard fell upon her ears like a sharp blow. Mrs. Hubert was talking and laughing in tones of loud, ringing merriment.

"Hubert has lost his heart indeed," his sister thought; but still, in answer to Mrs. Hubert's sharp, clear "Come in," she went in without any expression of reproach in manner or face.

Mrs. Hubert was seated at a dainty

little repast before the fire, and her husband was ministering to her many delicate little wants with anxious care.

"You won't mind my dining alone after my journey, will you, Jenifer?" the bride began in a lazily apologetic way. "Flora and I make a point of doing so always when we're alone after travelling; the feeling of not having to stir out of one's room before going to bed is so inducive of composure."

"Will you come and see my mother? she is better, and has sent for you," Jenifer said a little coldly.

"Not to-night I think, thank you," Mrs. Hubert replied, bending forward as she spoke to see if her husband was putting the proper ingredients into a tomato salad. "Just the tiniest soupçon of sugar, Hugh, that's quite enough; now do deal gently with the mustard; if you spoil that salad I won't eat an atom more dinner, and then you know I shall have neuralgia."

"Then you won't come and see my mother to-night?" Jenifer asked angrily. "Hubert," she added more softly, "think of our poor mother, before you let me go back and say your wife won't come to her."

"Don't you think you had better go, Effie?" he suggested appealingly.

"I am not going to-night, Hugh; you know if I get fussed and worried about when I'm tired, that I always have a headache; your mother couldn't see me when I came, and now I'm in my dressing-gown, settled down for the evening, you can tell her, Jenifer. Of course everything is very sad and miserable, but that's no reason why I should be made ill. Oh, Hubert! you've put ever so much more sugar than you ought, and now I can't eat anything." And she flung herself back in her chair, looking wonderfully white and dainty amongst her billowing laces, as if the tomato salad was the chief consideration to every well-regulated mind in the house.

"I wish you to go, Effie; it is my mother's right that her wishes should be obeyed," Hubert protested.

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" the bride said contemptuously; "as far as 'rights' go, I'm the mistress of the house now if you're the master, and as I can't do your mother any good, I'll stand on my rights, and not go to her till I feel inclined. There's no affectionate sentiment involved in the matter, you know, and it is so much more convenient to be practical."

BEFORE THE HOSPITAL FIRE.

THE wounded and the sick are safe in their beds; on uneasy pillows here and there, but mostly showing faces lighted with restfulness and gratitude. The nurses are at their quiet useful work. The "sisters" are flitting from ward to ward; somewhat more pronounced than need be as to costume, since costume does not conduce to convalescence, if devoted ladies could but be assured so, and kind lips and eyes would lose none of their kind expression if presented without a framework of stiff-starched linen. The doctors, for sure, are engaged in watchful diagnosis gravely, or in freer description to the strip-lings who accompany them as students, but who are not, all of them, so studious as they will find there is strict need to be.

An unexpected appearance is here, too, and one that makes the smiles deepen, and brings a stop and a little happy chat. Up and down the long straight corridor is a small child-patient, wheeling himself about on smoothly-gliding wheels which pass to him for a magnificent horse; and up and down the long straight corridor behind him runs a second small child-patient (only that he is smaller), whipping up the wheels, without even any whip, and being elatedly sure that he is increasing the wheels' pace immeasurably.

"Why, you are indeed having a fine ride this morning! Do you like it?"

"Yes."

"And will it be your turn next, you little one?"

"Yes."

"That's right. And what have you done to your arm, that it is in this sling?"

"Broke it. Fell over mother's coal-scuttle."

"And you, you grand fellow, up on this big animal. What is the matter with you?"

"Sore toe—abscess. Ever so big," which it must have been, since the young braggart's whole bigness could almost have been put into a great-coat pocket.

"Are you quite happy?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" with clearly no mistake about it, for the no-whip whips the no-horse, and the no-horse glides off on its no-feet, no value being placed even on caressing talk, in the face of such rare and brisk enjoyment.

All this has to be left, however. To get before the fire is what is desired, and no fire has been encountered yet, or has made its presence known by flame or flicker.

The truth is, that to get before the fire, this ground-floor of the University College Hospital is not the right floor, and it has to be left. It is the kitchen fire that is being sought for, out of this patients' part altogether; and so way is led downstairs, and there, at once, is the hospital kitchen in its hour of fullest business, and there is the hospital cook, with her appliances, at the head and paramount.

It is well. Some head is wanted, and that there should be power to be paramount is as great a physical necessity. Because, for this day's dinner, there are to be thirty-eight mutton-chops, two shoulders of mutton, two legs, two necks, three roast fowls, twenty-three fried "fishes," a boiled sole, a dozen steaks, eighty pounds of beef-tea, many quarts of mutton broth, seven "minces," a bushel of potatoes, a pyramid of "greens," thirteen rice-puddings, two custards. Because, for this day's dinner, all these are to be ready at twelve o'clock, all are to be served up piping hot, and so appetisingly cooked that invalids' small eating powers shall be whetted to their best exertions at the mere smell and sight of them, and if as much as that is to be done by a slim and comely young woman but just inducted into her duties, there had better not be the possession of a heart with any liability to fail, or all would fail to keep it company, and sick and wounded, nurses, sisters, doctors, would suffer from the catastrophe, in a shock of intense surprise.

How is it then? Does failure seem imminent with this University cook? Not for a moment. She is before the fire now, in proud, but tranquil survey and superintendence of her savoury preparations, and she has the gigantic undertaking as much under her command and at her fingers' ends, as if she were merely cook to a small family, as if she were merely arranging a conventional repast of soup and joint, a couple of vegetables, and sweets.

"Take care of the heat, please," she says, as she lifts up a slice of the door of her Brobdingnagian oven, and shows her fifteen tin baking-dishes, some of them full of blistering rice, some of them full of swelling custard. And the next moment she is explaining how she began to boil the rice for this subsequent baking at eight o'clock, and she can even give the quantities—seven pounds of rice to twelve quarts of milk—and relate how she puts no water to the milk, but keeps it pure.

"The joints are here," she says the next

moment, lifting up another slice of the huge oven door, letting out another burst of heat and hiss, giving another caution that these may be overpowering, and had better not obtain the compliment of too close approach.

Quick upon this comes a poulterer's lad. He appears before her bearing three fowls ready trussed, some butter, and some lard. She takes possession of them with magical absorption, the three fowls being instantly slid into that huge swallowing oven, and then she flashes out a question.

"Haven't you brought that extra egg?"

He hasn't.

"No, miss; I forgot."

The idea! forgetfulness is not to be tolerated by a University official, neither will adherence to faithful discharge of duty allow the non-delivery of a single egg to be condoned. The outraged dignitary is before the fire again, drawing out from the range a great hot gridiron-drawer full of spluttering mutton-chops, and is turning one with tongs, turning another and another, and another again. But she must deliver her admonition.

"Don't forget to-morrow morning, then," she snaps out; "if you do I shall send you back, for if I don't look after you, I shall never get that egg at all."

Then she goes on again to turn the chops, and to turn, and to turn still, and she has spare power to explain even then that the quantity of eggs which has passed through her hands this morning is one hundred and ninety-eight, giving explicit account of the method of these reaching the wards, and of what becomes of them. She tells us that eggs are not cooked (for the patients) under her direction at all; that the nurses attend to them in the ward sculleries; where some (by the doctors' orders) are boiled for certain patients' breakfasts, some are beaten up in tea, some are given (beaten up in wine, or brandy, or as otherwise prescribed) at various times during the day, wherever a patient's condition is such that this especial nourishment is required. We learn that (not only with eggs, but with all else) when the doctor has issued his day's orders for a ward, the sister of the ward makes a list, giving the total of the food the ward requires; that the steward receives the list, and all lists, making a total of the food the whole hospital requires, and writing orders for the different trades-people from it; that she herself (cook) has a copy of the list, as instructions about

what is to be delivered to her, and what she is to cook; all making her bound to be watchful in every direction everywhere, lest a hitch should come, throwing the admirable discipline quite out.

Is she not herself, however, throwing discipline out notably, and doing that for which no watchfulness, even of the uninitiated, need ever be exercised at all? For, see, she may be thinking that the sides of the chops she is still turning uppermost are cooked; but, although it may be presumption, it will only be kind to tell her that she is mistaken, for that there they are plainly quite raw.

She smiles. She is not a jot less serene and supreme. "Here is the heat," she says, pointing to another gridiron-drawer (rack, it seems, is the technical term) a storey higher, so to speak, than the one still receiving her quick care. "Here."

That heat-rack she has pointed to is not, as it had appeared, a rack of over-browned sponge-cakes or tasty little oblong pies, arranged in orderly compact rows; it is a rack full of similarly sized fire-bricks, among which gas-jets are diffused copiously, making it that the heat, or fire, is above the meat and not below it, and that cooking, with comic inversion, takes place upside down.

There is a laugh at the absurd simplicity of this when it is recognised; and then—the cook is gone. She is away, at the far end of the kitchen, sharply watching a butcher's man in butchers' blue, who has stridden in, and possessed himself of something in a sack, which he proceeds to weigh in immense scales.

"Twenty-two," he says.

"Twenty-two," she says. She is coinciding with him; and then she is rushing away to write something down at a small semi-official table, and rushing back again.

"Ten," he says, having changed the first sack for a second one.

"Ten," she says, still coincidingly, with the rush away, the short writing, and the rush back, as before.

"Sixteen and a half."

"Sixteen and a half." It is her echo; and it is over a third sack; when she runs, and writes, gives the butcher man a small piece of paper, and he strides away, well loaded.

"Would you——?"

She is before the fire again—or, at the least, half-way towards it—when this part of a question stops her; she smiles; she has thorough comprehension, without any

need to hear more; and she insinuates herself through a narrow strait between her two kitchen-tables, takes up her scrap of written paper and explains.

"Dripping," she says. "So many pounds of it. Waste. Bones. We keep an account; I give him a tally; and then we know."*

"Good-morning, miss."

It is another respectful visitor, the clank of cans and the glisten of pewter making his arrival quite picturesquely noticeable.

"Good-morning, miss," he repeats; and he has so much respectfulness that he removes his hat.

Cook looks; cook nods. What he has brought is milk, of course. He has brought twenty-two gallons and one quart of it, when his delivery is complete; he receives a little note to say he has delivered, and he departs.

In a minute he is succeeded by a fishmonger. The tray the new comer carries and that he plumps down before the cook, close to her on the table, is weighted with the twenty-three "fishes" that have been ordered for frying, and the sole for boiling. Slices of cod are here, and slices of turbot, and small haddock (for, so that the fish is "white" fish, the fishmonger may send what sort he can); and it is a "take," or a "catch," or a "haul," which cook straightway hands over to her maid. Hospital arrangements have furnished her kitchen with this maid (also with a kitchen man), and the maid makes a large basinful of batter, with the rapidity of her lady superior, spreads a cloth, flours it, lays on it all her "fishes," turns the half of the cloth over to dry them, and then dips each piece into the batter, and at once pops it into a huge fish-kettle half full of boiling lard, as if by a few turns of the handle of a machine.

As if by a few turns of the handle of a machine, too, many other things are going on.

* As large a sum as eighty pounds is made of this refuse annually at the University College Hospital; an important item, considering its insufficient revenue, and the much larger sphere of usefulness before it if it had more funds.

"Dripping," and "bones," want no word; but it is proper to explain that "waste" means bouilli, or the beef fibre and mutton fibre after they have been made to yield their utmost harvest of mutton-broth and beef-tea. At present, this waste is used to feed dogs and pigs; but reflecting on the probability that the material still contains some nourishment and some flavour (and being sure of perfect cleanliness and purity, received thus, in the gross, from a public institution), a philanthropist is now engaged in experimentalising as to the utilisation of this in the meals of such very poor as otherwise would never get animal food at all.

Here is the kitchen-man triumphantly extricating a bushel of potatoes from a gigantic copper steamer (steam, simply turned on by a tap, being the medium for boiling, just as gas, simply turned on by a tap, is the medium for every roast and grill); each potato in its tan-coloured jacket for the nurses to peel upstairs, the whole bushel of them, in a vast open wire basket. Here, again, is the kitchen-man mincing up meat in a hand-mincer, for the children who are too young to cut their meat up for themselves. Here is a whitewasher helping himself to a pail of boiling water, and being routed from one tap to another by a skirmishing reproof. Here is the cook, in passing, explaining that this great clothes-basket, already half filled with bread-crusts and cuttings, will be quite full by five o'clock, when the children of the thirteen poor women employed as scrubbers will have them divided amongst them. Here is a nurse come for some fresh supply of one or other of the things that the nurses keep upstairs (in strictly-regulated and strictly-entered quantities), such as Brand's essence of beef, bottled calves'-foot jelly, linseed, mustard, barley, arrowroot, oatmeal grits, tinned oxtail soup, soda-water, corn-flour, Robb's biscuits, lemons, aerated bread, and the baker's ordinary sort. Here is a sister for something of the kind, too. The "Yes, sister," "No, sister," "Not now, sister," "Certainly, sister," heard in the brisk cook's answers, referring doubtless to some very "special diet" indeed. Here is the magical disappearance of a row of bottles of beer; they were on the window-sill a moment ago. Here is the magical display of a row of huge stone jugs of beer on draught. Here is the magical display of a cluster of large tin cans to be filled with boiling beef-tea; of a cluster of portly white porcelain jugs to be filled with mutton-broth. Here is the whole magical new appearance of the kitchen tables, which have had all their litter cleared, and are now spread with great hot-water pewter dishes, being filled with boiling water, and lying, each one, under its cover, that the covers may get heated as well. Here is a great oblong, flat, double pewter dish—really a pewter table or tray—steaming up a little atmosphere of its own, from the good supply of boiling water it has had poured into the hollow bosom of it, with a well at one end, to catch good gravy when it comes, and with no cover at all, but with a side supporter, here, in a pair of scales, and a

side supporter, there, in a great crockery dish.

It is the token that the crucial moment in this day's kitchen proceedings has come. From before the fire the kitchen-man brings a neck of beautifully-roasted mutton, hoisting it on to a tin square dish; by one stroke of his deft knife he severs the roof, or envelope, of fat from the delicate lean underneath, and by one lift he places it as unsuitable on the crockery dish.

"The doctors are against it," says the swift performer, merely like a breath, or whiff. And then, quick as his knife will go, he joints the neck, cuts each joint off, and lays them in a ready pile.

"The butchers don't do their best with these things, sometimes," he complains, for another whiff of words, "which makes it worse for me."

However this may be, the neck is speedily cut up; the next neck is there, and un-roofed, and cut up; the two shoulders follow one another, and are sliced and sliced, till there are only the two broad-spread blade-bones left in memory of them (deposited on the dish as a supplement to the fat); the two legs follow these, and are sliced and sliced—the knuckles, wrapped in a cloth, being held in the carver's hand, and no fork being wanted—until only the barest bones are left. All these joints are sliced before there is time, scarcely, to understand the manner of it, and the whole of them is there, in a great hot mutton-mountain, which would slide down in a great mutton-avalanche, if it had been destined to be piled any higher still.

But carving is done, with the exception of the three fowls—the merest bagatelle.

"Each makes four diets," remarks the nimble man. "Legs two, wings two, and the wings are the best, because the breast goes with them."

As he speaks, the "diets" are there, fowls seeming to fall into fourths by the mere looking, or legs and wings seeming to be simply on hinges, which unhinge themselves at a touch, with excellent amiability. As he speaks, too, here is cook in his place, and he at the scales; and here are four stalwart porters, seen so suddenly they almost bring a start, their hospital uniform shielded by high white aprons, their burdens huge butler's trays; and they themselves—their trays deposited at the convenient side—in wait at the hot pewter-dishes, straight in the cook's and the carver's face.

The cook is armed. She has a long, flat tin straining-spoon, or ladle, a long steel

kitchen fork. Brisk as ever, without a word and without a pause, she ladles the hot mutton-slices on to the scales-tray, she steadies the pile with her handy fork, while, as fast as the drop of the tray shows that the ordered weight of meat is there, the carver has the tray up and towards a pewter-dish, with the serving-man attending upon it, lifting the cover that the meat may go on it at a slide, and shutting the cover down again, for as little heat as possible to get away. It is done again, this as swiftly as it can be told, the cook with her ladleful, and with many a ladleful, till the scale-tray once more weighs down; the tray being lifted, and the meat slid, and the covers raised and shut, till all of the twelve dishes have had a serving (a thirteenth, marked C.W., for Children's Ward, getting its share in turn), and there is no longer any mutton-mountain for the cook to ladle at, since she has raised it, in her rapidity, down to the pewter ground.

There are the fowls, though; with the carver, no longer having scale-work, reading from a list as to the wards to which they are to go.

"Two for three," he says, "two for five, two for six, one for seven, two for ten, one for eleven, two for children's."

In the same way, there are the chops: "Two for one," the carver reads out; "four for four, four for five, three for six, five for seven, one for eight, three for nine," and so on, till all the thirty-eight are appropriated, each dish bearing a number to correspond with the ward to which it belongs, each dish having the cover of it lifted by its attendant, each getting the "diets" specified, on the instant, from the cook.

There is just one steak, as it chances, for some special need, and the carver calls it. "Steak for three," he says. When three's cover is lifted, cook reaches the steak from before the fire (as she has reached the chops), the cover is down, and the steak in.

"Minces," cries the carver. "A mince for one, one for eight, one for ten, six for children," with the cook pouring a spoonful of her rich hot gravy left from the mutton-slices over each mince-hillock, which leaves them done.

"Mutton-broth."

It changes the order a little, giving the cook breathing-time; since the bulky jugs of broth have been filled by the cook's maid; it is there on the table, and the men

can help themselves to it. "Two for three," are the directions they get. "Four for six, one for seven, and that's the lot. No, no, there's none for ten."

So do "fishes" change the order somewhat. Cook has brought the fish near up; it is splendidly fried, and so as not to run the risk of breaking the tender skin with a slice or any knife and fork, she lifts each piece, as it is called for, with her hand.

"Two for seven," cries the carver.

"Seven," she repeats.

"Two for eleven."

"Eleven," each piece being put on a tin plate by itself (not amongst the meats), till the fishes' list is closed.

The custard-puddings are served in the same way. One rice-pudding, whole as it is, goes on to each tray (the servings of custard being daintily laid on the top); one can of beef-tea goes on to each tray, and there is the addition, to each, of a large basin of potatoes, and a tin plateful of wholesome greens. It is odd to hear "Six oysters for three," because it has a scanty sound about it, till it is remembered that "three" means the ward, and the six but one "diet." It is odder still, and odder by far to hear, as an after-thought or supplementary issue, "Two fishes for the Erysipelas Ward! Two custards for the Infectious!" And then the interest centres in the serving-men, who lift the huge heavily-weighted trays straight up on to their heads; who march out without a flinch—masculine edifices as they are, great solid human towers—and who reappear in a few minutes, to march out again, crowned exactly the same, till all the thirteen loads are dispersed, and the two hundred patients whom the thirteen wards contain are able, fitly and nourishingly, to dine.

It is a moment that brings a sigh throughout the kitchen, with the cook dropping her hands, relieved.

"Have you nothing more?"

"Nothing," she says, "till to-morrow morning. Till we prepare for dinner again. Hospital patients have no tea from us, you know; no butter, no sugar. They never do, at any hospitals. They all have to find their own breakfasts and teas—unless they are too poor, when the nurses see to it. If they are ordered rashers of bacon, they get it given; the same as if they are ordered eggs. So we give the bread, and the milk; but not the butter, sugar, and tea. I am clear now, therefore, for to-day, and I can—rest."

Is not this curious fact about tea another reason for interested and perhaps presumptuous enquiry? seeing that there must be many poor patients entirely unable to find grocery for themselves, and one of the best ways, possibly, to help the University College Hospital would be to send special grocery-money, that no poor invalid need be obliged to abstain from a cup of tea, when the invalid in the next bed, possibly, is enjoying it, and it would be so much comfort and do so much good. But the cook is tired. She shall be left to her rest.

It shall only be added that a People's Fund exists at the University College Hospital for small donations from the very classes by whom hospitals are used. It is doing, and it has been doing since January, 1878, exactly what Hospital Saturdays are meant to do; with the grand exception that it is doing it always, making every day a Saturday, it may be said, all the weeks through.

It has boxes in workshops, railway-yards, breweries, taverns, parcels' offices, factories; it gets, by means of these small pence and shillings, as much as amounts annually to about three hundred pounds. Pounds take care of themselves, it is said, when pence are thus nicely cared for. Undoubtedly, unless the pounds are as good as the proverb, there will not always be such an admirable dinner at University College Hospital before the fire.

TIME BARGAINS.

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"BINKS, what day of the month is this?"

"This, miss, is Wednesday, the 26th of May, Anny Dominy——"

"Never mind the year, Binks."

"No, miss, certingly not."

And with that Binks, the staid and decorously stolid butler, left the room.

The other speaker was a charming girl of twenty—Lilian Ramsay by name. She was brown-haired and brown-eyed, with a complexion that one of Dian's nymphs might have envied, so fresh, and pure, and natural was it. In figure she was tall and slender. She had shot up suddenly after she was fifteen, and at nineteen had been still wondering when she should cease growing. But her mind was at rest on that point by this time.

Her creamy white dress this warm May morning was made of some soft and clinging

material that showed off the graceful lines of her figure to advantage, and was ornamented with a scroll-work pattern of ivy-leaves and rosebuds worked in crewels. From garden and conservatory she had brought in a great heap of flowers, which she was now arranging in a vase on the centre-table. The clock on the chimney-piece chimed the half-hour past eight.

As Miss Ramsay arranged her flowers, her thoughts wandered into a certain groove in which they had found themselves somewhat frequently of late.

"To-day is the 26th of May, Binks says, and the 26th of June is to be my wedding-day." Here there came an unmistakable sigh. "I wish—I hardly know what I wish. I suppose that Cuthbert and I will be as happy as most married people seem to be—though that, perhaps, is not saying much. I dare say that I shall gradually tire of his society and he of mine. Perhaps, if people saw no more of each other after marriage than they do before, they would not tire of each other quite so soon."

At this moment the subject of her thoughts entered the room.

Cuthbert Naylor at this time had not seen his seven-and-twentieth birthday, but looked older than his years. He was somewhat under the average height, and spare in proportion. His short stubby hair, which stood out in every direction in defiance of comb and brush, was of a light sandy colour, as were also his sparse and straggling whiskers. Taken by themselves, his features were well enough, but their expression was commonplace, mean, and pinched. It was as though his brain stood in need of more nourishment and his sympathies of further expansion.

"Good-morning, Lilian," said Cuthbert as he walked into the room with a couple of bulky Blue Books under his arm.

"Good gracious, Cuthbert, how you startled me!"

Mr. Naylor smiled a little icy smile and held out his hand, which Lilian took for a moment.

"How cold you are! Enough to freeze one," she said.

"I have been at work in the library since six, getting up statistics for my father's speech."

"And no fire lighted, I dare say. Even in May it is chilly so early in the morning."

"I did not feel the need of a fire. I rather like being cold when I am busy. It helps to keep one's brain clear."

He put his Blue Books on the table, and rubbed his long thin hands together.

"And you are always busy," responded Lilian with a little sigh. "Do you know, Cuthbert, I had been thinking about you for quite three minutes and a half before you came in?"

"Um! You found the subject a pleasant one?"

"Yes. Why not? Do you know what day of the month this is?"

"Of course I do. That is one of the things I can't understand any one forgetting. It's the 26th of May."

"Yes; the 26th of May. Well?"

"Well—what?"

"Oh, nothing."

"You know how I dislike enigmas."

"Then why have anything to do with our sex?"

"I see now what you are driving at. You wish to remind me that this day month will be our wedding-day."

"Perhaps I do and perhaps I don't. I forget now what I did wish."

She was not regarding him, but with her head a little on one side, was contemplating the arrangement of her flowers in the vase.

"You petulant darling!" said Cuthbert with his chilly smile. "Why don't you keep cool? I do—always."

Lilian turned and stretched out her hands towards him as though she were holding them before a fire, then rubbed them together, and pretended to shiver.

"I've a lot of work to get through before the 26th of June," went on Mr. Naylor as he ran his fingers through his stubby hair. "Statistics for my father's speech on Pauperism as a Crime, my own pamphlet on the Opium Question to finish and correct for the press, and I know not what besides."

For a moment the delicate flush on Lilian's cheek deepened.

"Then why not put our marriage off—say till next year, or the year after that, or, in fact, till all matters of greater importance have been attended to?"

"My dear Lilian," responded Mr. Naylor with the slightest possible lifting of his eyebrows, "these little ebullitions of temper are very charming, but you should try to keep them better under control. Our wedding-day is fixed, and the event will take place in due course. There is no fear of my forgetting it. I have it noted down in my diary under the proper date." He produced his tablets from one

of his pockets and opened them. "See, here is the entry. 'June 26th.—To be married.' I shall have plenty of leisure during our honeymoon to elaborate my pamphlet on The Financial Future of the Fiji Islands."

Lilian paused with a rosebud in her fingers; then she said in her most matter-of-fact tone:

"You promised to take me up the Rhino, and to show me the ruined castles, and the lovely scenery, and the quaint old towns."

"But one can't be looking at ruined castles and pretty scenery for ever. One may always count on a certain proportion of bad weather. I like to have something solid to fall back upon on a rainy day."

There was a little pause. Cuthbert looked at Lilian; she seemed to have eyes only for her flowers. Then she said:

"I am going down to the old mill after breakfast to finish a little sketch. Can you spare an hour and go with me?"

"Impossible," answered Mr. Naylor with decision. "I have several matters that must be attended to without delay—letters to answer, a couple of Blue Books to wade through, numerous——"

"Not another word, Cuthbert, please. Knowing how your time is taken up, it was foolish of me to ask you."

"It was not foolish of you to ask me, but, knowing what I have to do before post-time, it would have been foolish of me to comply."

"Forgive me; I was wrong, as I always am."

There was a tear in her voice, but Mr. Naylor's sympathies were not attuned to such niceties and he perceived nothing.

"Why should you waste so much time over flowers, and sketching, and music, and new novels?" he presently asked.

"Because I like flowers, and sketching, and music, and new novels."

"Of course such things are very well in their places, but there is always a liability to overdo them—to make an occupation of them instead of an occasional relaxation. As the intended wife of a future Member of Parliament, don't you think that you could find a more rational and useful way of spending your spare time?"

"I don't know; I never thought of it."

"You have plenty of intelligence. All that you need is a little more solidity."

"More solidity! Yes, Cuthbert."

"Why not try to lighten my labours by helping me a little now and then?"

"Gladly. Only tell me what it is that I can do."

"Suppose you make a start at once? Instead of sitting in a damp meadow, sketching a preposterous water-mill, what do you say to copying out for me a number of extracts from this book?" Speaking thus, he took up one of the Blue Books, opened it, and pointed out one or two passages to Lilian. "For instance, see here, and here," he said.

"I will copy them for you with pleasure."

"Most interesting reading, when once you come to study them, as you will find."

Taking the book from Mr. Naylor, Lilian read the title aloud:

"Tabulated Statements Showing the Increase and Decrease in Import and Export Tonnage at the Ports of London, Liverpool, Hull, and——"

She paused in a little dismay.

Mr. Naylor smiled. The situation was one that he could appreciate.

"Don't be alarmed, I beg. It may look formidable at first, but it is nothing when you are used to it."

Then, looking at his watch, he exclaimed:

"Good gracious! I had no idea it was so late. I must go at once. I will see you again after breakfast, and then we will talk further of these and other matters."

He drew her to him, pressed his lips to her forehead, and next moment she was alone.

"Import and export tonnage!" sighed Lilian as she put the Blue Book back on the table. "As Cuthbert's future wife, I suppose I ought to learn all about such things." She crossed to one of the windows and stood gazing out over the sunlit lawn, to where the great elms cast shadows cool and inviting in the park beyond. "I sometimes wish I had been born in my grandmother's days," she mused, "before women were expected to be quite so clever; when to love their husbands, and look after their homes, and to do as they would be done by, was nearly all that was expected of them. Yes, I certainly wish that I had come into the world seventy years ago."

At this juncture Mr. Jellicop entered the room. He was the owner of Brookfield, the fine old country mansion where our little history was being enacted. He was a stout hearty-looking man of sixty, with a rubicund complexion, white hair and whiskers to match, and one of the most

genial and infectious laughs in the world. He was the soul of hospitality, and, having no family of his own, he was never happy unless his house was half full of guests.

"Well, my rose-bud, down before me as usual," was his greeting to Lilian. "Can't you find something pretty for my button-hole?" With that he gave her a sounding kiss.

"Yes, here is a little posy that I have made up on purpose for you." Then she pinned the flowers in his coat while he looked at her with admiring eyes.

"Is our fresh arrival of last night," she asked, "the celebrated Captain Marmaduke, about whom the newspapers had so much to say a short time ago?"

"The very man, my dear."

"How delightful! I hope he will tell us all about his adventures."

"A dozen or more years ago he was cast away somewhere in the Indian Ocean and picked up by a tribe of aborigines, who carried him off into the interior. In order to save his life he adopted their manners and customs, and lived among them all that time as one of themselves."

"And escaped at last to come back home and find himself the lion of the season."

"And to find himself a dozen years behind-hand in the history of the world."

"What a deal he will have to learn. How many things he will find altered! I hope Captain Marmaduke is not very much tattooed."

"Captain Marmaduke is here to answer for himself."

Mr. Jellicop and Lilian started and turned. Standing at the open French window was the man of whom they had been speaking. He had been strolling along the terrace, smoking a cigarette, when his attention had been attracted by the sound of his name. He flung away his cigarette, lifted his hat, bowed gravely, and now came slowly forward into the room.

He was a tall, muscular, well-built man, with a certain easy stateliness of gait and manner that was not improbably a legacy of the wild life he had led for so many years. His complexion, whatever it might once have been, was now burnt by the rays of a tropical sun to one uniform tint of clear reddish-brown. His eyes were dark, full, and piercing, and when in animated conversation he would look for several minutes straight at the person to whom he was talking without a single blink of the eyelids. He had rather a large nose that inclined to the aquiline

in shape; a firm-set mouth which, however, broke easily into a smile, and a splendid set of teeth. His hair was a mass of short brown curls which clung closely to his head, but the hardships he had undergone had already begun to streak it with grey. Finally, Captain Marmaduke grew neither whiskers nor moustache, and his age was probably somewhere between thirty and forty.

"My dear sir, welcome to Brookfield," exclaimed Mr. Jellicop, as his hand went out and closed on that of his visitor with a hearty grip.

"Then you are Mr. Jellicop," said the other, "and it is to you that I am indebted for my very kind invitation?"

"Your brother Charles and I were schoolmates and friends. When I heard that you were in the neighbourhood I could not resist taking the liberty of asking you to come and see us."

"My answer to your invitation is my presence here this morning."

"I am sorry that I had gone to bed before you arrived last night, but we rustics generally keep early hours. Now that you are here, I hope you will make your stay as long a one as possible. Mrs. Jellicop is from home at present, but here is her substitute, Miss Lilian Ramsay, a ward of mine, and my housekeeper pro tem. Lily, my love, this is Captain Marmaduke of whom we have all read and heard so much."

Lilian had had time to recover from the confusion into which his sudden appearance had thrown her, and now favoured him with a demure little curtsy.

"As Miss Ramsay will perceive," said Marmaduke with a slow, grave smile, "I am not very much tattooed; in fact, I may add that I am not tattooed at all. That was a branch of the fine arts that the Chincas, the tribe among whom I lived for so long a time, omitted to cultivate. Here and there a great swell would wear a ring through his nose, and it was considered the proper thing for young ladies of fashion to shave off their left eyebrows. But we never got as far as tattooing."

"Life among the Chincas would hardly have suited you, Lily," observed Jellicop.

"I am not so sure on that point," answered Lilian, laughing. "If it were the fashion to have one eyebrow instead of two, I dare say that I should do the same as other people. But I must leave you now, uncle. I have a score things to attend to. Captain Marmaduke, we shall meet again."

CHAPTER II.

MR. JELlicOP looked after Lilian with admiring eyes as she left the room.

"A sweet girl," he said; "but just a little bit spoiled—just a leetle bit spoiled."

"Where is the man who could help spoiling her?" said Captain Marmaduke.

"Always calls me 'uncle,' though she's only my ward. Parents both dead, poor thing. She's engaged to Cuthbert Naylor."

"Ah!"

"The affair's to come off sometime next month. By-the-bye, Cuthbert's father, Vere Naylor, the member for Fudgington, is here, and will be pleased to meet you."

"Vere Naylor? Was he not rather conspicuously mixed up with the passing of the New Marriage Act?"

"He was the moving spirit all through. Naylor and I have been friends from boyhood, and I was never more sorry in my life than when I found him advocating so detestable a piece of legislation."

"Then you don't approve of the measure, Mr. Jellicop?"

"Approve of it! I think it the most vile and unprincipled—— But I won't trust myself to say what I think of it. I have two nieces, sir, both of whom were married three years ago under the provisions of the new Act, and now they and their husbands are about to separate."

"Shall I have the pleasure of seeing the ladies in question?"

"You will meet them at breakfast. They are expecting their papers from London by every post. I invited them here, thinking to argue with them, and talk them out of their preposterous notion of leaving their husbands; but I might as well have talked to the man in the moon."

"Then I presume, that when your ward, Miss Ramsay, and Mr. Cuthbert Naylor, become husband and wife, they will be married in conformity with the regulations of the new Act?"

"Undoubtedly they will—more's the pity! But here comes Naylor himself. He will be delighted to tell you all about the new Act. Likes to hear himself talk. Most M.P.'s do like to hear themselves talk."

At this moment Mr. Naylor, who had been taking an early constitutional, came stepping in through the French window with a certain assumption of youthful jauntiness. If the son had a knack of looking older than his years, Mr. Naylor, senior, flattered himself that he looked younger than his.

Although he was partially bald and had to claim the assistance of a double eyeglass when reading or writing, he was certainly more sprightly and vivacious in many ways than his son. There was a certain solemn priggishness about the latter from which the father was free. In other particulars they were remarkably alike: in the general cast of their features, in that expression of commonplace shrewdness, of narrow views and ideas, of ignoble aims; even their voices had the same cold, unsympathetic ring; and they had both the same mode of emphasising a statement with two fingers of the right hand on the palm of the left.

"Morning, Naylor," said Mr. Jellicop. "Allow me to introduce you to Captain Marmaduke."

"Whose name has been on all our lips for the last six months."

"Marmaduke, my old friend, Vere Naylor."

The two men shook hands and gave expression to the usual commonplaces.

"Marmaduke wants to know all about the new Marriage Act," resumed Jellicop. "He went away in the good old times before morals were corrupted by Act of Parliament."

"Ha, ha! Always will have your joke," sniggered Naylor. Then turning to Marmaduke he added: "But, seriously, if you want to hear about the new Act, you could not have come to a better quarter."

"I must leave you now for a little while," said their host to the two men. "Naylor, be happy, you've got a listener. And remember, both of you, that breakfast will be on the table at ten-thirty sharp."

"Good-hearted creature," remarked the M.P. as Jellicop left the room, "but belonging altogether to the old school. Brimful of prejudices, cannot keep pace with the times—in short, little better than a human fossil." Then drawing a chair up to the table, he added: "With regard to the new Marriage Act?"

"That is what I am anxious to hear about," responded Marmaduke as he drew up another chair.

Mr. Vere Naylor rubbed his hands with an air of enjoyment. Mr. Jellicop had spoken no more than the truth; the member for Fudgington was never so happy as when he had secured a good listener.

"The new Act came into operation just eight years ago," he began, "at which time the existing marriage laws were a disgrace to our age and country. Ill-assorted unions

seemed to increase in number year by year. Much of the rottenness of modern society had its origin in unhappy marriages. If two people found out after a time that they had made a terrible mistake, was it just or reasonable that they should suffer for it as long as they lived? In all the other contracts of life it was possible to rectify an error, but in marriage there was no way of escape save over the *via dolorosa* that led to the Divorce Court. You follow me, Captain Marmaduke?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Naylor."

"Our new Act does not interfere with the old style of marriage—the style of our fathers and mothers—but such marriages are looked upon as 'bad form,' and are becoming more obsolete in society year by year. We have now legalised a new system of union by civil contract, either for life or for a term of three years only. If, at the end of three years, the husband and wife are desirous of a separation, they must make a mutual declaration to that effect, otherwise the marriage remains valid for life. The declaration in question must be signed and witnessed before an officer of the Crown appointed for that purpose, after which, in the course of a little time, the Deed of Dissolution is sent to the parties concerned from the central office in London. After the marriage has been dissolved for a certain length of time, the ex-husband and ex-wife may marry again, or may even re-marry each other should they be idiots enough to do so. A grand system, sir! The finest piece of legislation of our age."

"But in cases where there happen to be children?"

"The simplest matter in the world. We recruit our army and navy with the boys, and train the girls for domestic service at home or in the colonies; that is, unless the parents are able and willing to provide for the children in their own way."

"When the new law came into operation how did you meet the requirements of the unhappy couples who had already been married under the old system but were now desirous of severing their chains?"

"People already married had the option of separation. I and my wife availed ourselves of the opportunity; not that we did not agree together, but Mrs. Naylor thought with me that, for the sake of example, we ought to separate. She subsequently married my old friend Wapshot. *and is now known as Mrs. Naylor Wapshot. She is expected at Brookfield to-day, if she be*

not here already, and I shall have much pleasure in introducing you to each other. You will find her a most superior woman. I don't know a woman with fewer prejudices than Mrs. Naylor Wapshot. Why, bless my heart, here she is in proper person! What a most extraordinary coincidence!"

Mrs. Naylor Wapshot stood for a moment with the open door in her hand, then she closed it behind her, and came forward into the room.

She was a woman of fifty, somewhat angular and hard-featured, and with none of those prepossessing traits about her with which feminine middle age, even in the absence of good looks, not unfrequently contrives to clothe itself. She wore spectacles, and a broad-brimmed Leghorn-hat to shade her eyes from the sun. What small quantity of hair she had left was brushed backward and upward, and twisted into a little knob at the apex of her crown. She wore a serviceable homespun dress, a pair of thick walking-shoes, and she carried a butterfly-net in one hand.

Mr. Naylor went forward a step or two to meet his former wife.

"My dear Maria!—pardon the force of old associations—I'm delighted to meet you. Wapshot with you?"

"No. He has taken his geological hammer and a clean collar, and started for the Giant's Causeway."

"And you have come down here in search of beetles and butterflies?"

"There's so little else that is worth living for. How's Cuthbert?"

"Up to his ears in work as usual. Mark my words, Maria, that young man will be in the Cabinet before he's fifty. But I am unpardonably remiss. Allow me to introduce to you Captain Marmaduke, the celebrated traveller. Marmaduke, Mrs. Naylor Wapshot."

"Charmed to know you, Captain Marmaduke. I hope you made a special study of the coleoptera of the savage regions in which you lived for so long a time?"

"There was a certain species of termites, or white ants, of which we made a very special study."

"Indeed, now. One moment, if you please."

In that moment she was ready with her pencil and note-book.

"And pray what might be the chief characteristics of the particular ant in question?"

"When properly stewed it was very excellent eating."

"Ha, ha! Practical entomology with a vengeance," exclaimed Mr. Naylor.

Mrs. Wapshot took a note.

"Most interesting," she said. "What a pity you did not bring a few specimens back with you."

"Potted?"

"Alive. We might have acclimatised them, and have added another delicacy to our limited cuisine. And then the butterflies! But I cannot stay now. You and I must have some further talk on these interesting topics, Captain Marmaduke."

"I shall always be at your service, Mrs. Wapshot."

At this juncture a tall, dark, good-looking man, some seven or eight and twenty years old, and dressed in the extreme of the prevalent fashion, lounged slowly into the room by way of the French window. He was Cecil Dane, the husband of one of Mr. Jellicop's nieces. Addressing himself to the member for Fudgington, he said:

"Do you happen to know whether the post-bag has arrived?"

Seeing that Mr. Dane never hurried himself over anything, it was hardly surprising that he was slow of speech. Some people went so far as to say that he drawled, but it may be that they belonged to that numerous minority who rarely have a good word for anybody. In any case, Cecil Dane was one of the best-hearted and most generous-tempered fellows in the world.

Mr. Naylor looked at his watch.

"The bag is hardly due yet, I think. I am awaiting its arrival myself. Captain Marmaduke, Mr. Cecil Dane."

Under cover of this introduction, Mrs. Wapshot made her escape.

"I should like to get out for a year or two to those fellows you lived among," said Dane to Marmaduke.

"Nothing easier. The difficulty would be in getting back."

"I'm tired of this nineteenth century so-called culture and æsthetic humbug. Everybody nowadays wants to teach something to everybody else. I should like, by way of change, to try the life of the 'noble savage,' and live with my dog and my gun in a hut among the woods, where early English furniture would be less an essential than an early English style of costume."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Naylor. "Better to bear the ills you have, I say. No place like old England."

"Especially since the passing of Mr. Naylor's Marriage Act," said Marmaduke with a twinkle in his eye.

Dane shrugged his shoulders, and brought out his cigar-case.

"I shall go and look after the fellow with the post-bag," he said, and with that he lounged out of the room in his usual indolent fashion.

"Rather an anxious time for young Dane just now," remarked the M.P.

"How is that?"

"He is expecting his deed of separation by every post."

"He is married to one of Mr. Jellicop's nieces, is he not?"

"He is. You are in luck's way, my dear sir."

"I am glad to hear that."

"Not only is Cecil Dane waiting for his deed of separation, but young Elliott, the painter, who married another of Jellicop's nieces, is here with his wife for a similar purpose. What a splendid opportunity you will have for studying the working of the new Act. But I must go and look after the post-bag. Great nuisance having to wait so long for one's letters in the country. For the present—ta, ta."

"If any man ever believed in the efficacy of his own nostrums, that man is Vere Naylor, M.P. for Fudgington," remarked Marmaduke to himself. "I wonder whether Naylor fils is anything like Naylor père; if he is, I pity that pretty girl who is about to become his wife. And yet, why pity her? Doubtless she knows quite well what she is about."

He crossed to the table, and began to turn over an album in an absent-minded way.

"Is it always the woman that ought to be pitied in these ill-assorted marriages?" he asked himself. "How often are a man's household gods shattered, and his happiness wrecked, from sheer wilfulness of temper, from pure feminine caprice, from a wife's total incapacity to assimilate herself to her husband's ways of life and modes of thought. Thank Heaven, all women are not alike. Why here is Miss Ramsay's portrait; the very face. And she is to be Cuthbert Naylor's wife, and if at the end of three years they are tired of each other, they will separate. It seems to me that I should not tire of her at the end of twenty years." He closed the album and turned away. "One thing is very certain," he said aloud; "Mr. Cuthbert Naylor ought to consider himself a deuced lucky fellow."

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

LANCASHIRE. PART II.

FROM the low-lying shores of Morecambe the castle of Lancaster shows to advantage on its commanding brow overlooking the estuary with its little port and the bridge that crosses

The shallow stony Lone
That to old Lancaster its name did lend.

A grand old castle it is, although defaced and debased to serve its uses as a prison; one of the saddest fates to which an old castle can be reduced. But in view of the quiet provincial town, overlooked by these frowning walls, it excites a little wonder that the place should ever have required such a big castle for its defence. But glancing at the scenery with the hills closing in round about, and the wide waste of sand and sea; at the bridge, too, the handsome bridge of to-day with its elegant arches, which has replaced the earlier bridge—that narrow high-crowned bridge with the antique air, which tradition assigned to the Romans, and which was undoubtedly of high and venerable antiquity; and remembering that the road that crosses here was once the main artery of communication with the western frontier, the *raison d'être* of the grand castle becomes plain, with its utility as a mustering-ground and place of arms for the feudal levies of the west. It was with an eye to all this that the Conqueror entrusted the custody of this region to Roger of Poitou, bidding him build a castle, and hold it in strength both against Scot and Saxon. Plenty of stone lay there on the rocky brow cut and fashioned ready to the builder's hand, the remains of a deserted fort the Romans had built there long ago; a work of as much antiquity in those days as the castles of the Norman builders are to us. The keep of Roger's castle still dominates the pile in square and massive grandeur, while at one corner a later tower recalls the memory of the Plantagenets, and is called John of Gaunt's chair.

Another tower, called Adrian's Tower, is part of the original building, and is said to show traces of Roman foundations. John of Gaunt is again commemorated by an effigy in a niche, over the main gateway—an effigy, however, without any claim to antiquity.

John of Gaunt—time-honoured Lancaster—*has left his mark very decidedly upon the*

land. A great prince was this, rather of the Continental than the English type, with his leanings towards literature, and his encouragement of the new thought; with his castles in Spain, of which perhaps he thought more than this substantial one in hand at Lancaster. And a man whose dead hand is still felt in the land after all. For although his duchy, like the lean kine and the fat, in Pharaoh's dream, swallowed up the whole kingdom, yet this county palatine thus created by his father, Edward the Third, as a handsome provision for a younger son, still remains palatine to this day, with its own courts, its own chancery, its own sheriffs holding not from the crown, but from king or queen as Duke of Lancaster. It may be questioned whether in its origin the king did not outstrip the limits of his right. The king may make a belted knight, we know, and a' that; but was not a Palatine, like an honest man, a little aboon his might? A privilege pertaining, we will say, with due deference to the authorities on that head, to the Holy Roman Empire and its Cæsar. Edward, however, was not a man to be argued with, and indeed considered himself to be something of an emperor in his way. "Lord of sea and land, and wearing no less than an imperial crown."

Southward from Lancaster run road and rail together, as if laid out with a straight ruler; passing Ashton Hall, with its noble park, a hall that certainly ought to have a history if only from its commanding position and its fine views over the bay of Morecambe. But we may notice that it is generally the places which are ruined and decayed that have made history, while some of the most bright and prosperous looking have no story to tell worth listening to.

The whole country is thickly strewn with halls; the whole country between Lancaster and Preston, that is, between the banks of the Lune and the estuary of the Ribble—a placid agricultural region, not very fertile or thickly populated. The river Wyre winds through the district by halls and village spires; the former more plentiful than the latter—a county where one would say that the squires overpowered the parsons by ever so many to one—the Wyre, that twists and winds, and finally reaches the sea in a long sandy estuary. This estuary cuts off a low flat promontory, a district known as the Fylde; a district dreary enough but for a fresh breezy salt-water feeling about

it, with Fleetwood as its special port; a port with something stirring in its steamships and soldiers, with long lines of barracks rising out of the sea-haze, and the rattle of rifle-firing continually resounding over the sandy flats. Then there is Rossall close by with its colony of school-boys speckling the yellow sands with jackets and clean collars. And further south is Blackpool, the Margate of the Lancashire people, with its lines of hotels and lodging-houses drawn up before a fresh boisterous sea—Blackpool, crowded with visitors in the summer, and providing with careless ease for an extra four or five thousand excursionists from Saturday to Monday, and yet with an essential loneliness in sea and coast, hardly broken by the occasional surf that makes the Ribble mouth.

And by Ribble mouth stands Preston—proud Preston as its neighbours call it, though why proud above the rest is nowhere explained. Still, these local sayings often hit off a genuine characteristic, and Preston, with its guilds and old-fashioned celebrations, probably stands more on its dignity than the rough-and-ready manufacturing towns to the south-east. The manufacturer of Preston is perhaps something higher and grander than other manufacturers, with more of the country magnate about him than his brother of Oldham or Rochdale. This pride, it may be noted, seems to be characteristic of the district, with the accompaniment of carping criticism on the part of neighbours.

Proud Preston,
Poor people,
High church,
Low steeple.

Church and steeple, by the way, have both been pulled down and replaced by a new building with a conspicuously lofty spire.

One of the most notable incidents in Preston annals is the finish of the rising of 1715, the beginning of which we witnessed in Northumberland, Lord Derwentwater turning out with his servants and tenants, and meeting sundry of the gentry of Northumberland in arms for the Stuarts. From this point they marched into Scotland, and joined the Scotch Jacobite forces, under the Earl of Mar, at Kelso. Here disagreements broke out, the Highlanders breaking into mutiny, and refusing to march southwards. Eventually Forster, the general of the English contingent, resolved to march into Lancashire, where the gentry were known

to be Jacobite almost to a man; and so, with a considerable body of Highlanders, the route was taken through Cumberland, where the posse of the county, with Lord Lonsdale and the Bishop of Carlisle at their head—perhaps the last example of a bishop appearing on the tented field—melted away at their approach, and so through Penrith and Kendal to Lancaster, where the Pretender was proclaimed in due form, and from there to Preston, a regiment of militia and dragoons clearing out at their approach. The way was now open to Manchester, then a passionately Jacobite town, and by securing Warrington Bridge the whole of Lancashire would have been made safe. There were symptoms of a considerable scare on the part of the Hanoverians. The regular forces, held together by mechanical obedience, had no heart in the quarrel, and were hardly to be relied upon, the dragoons being especially untrustworthy. Forster hesitated and delayed, and the opportunity was lost, and when General Willis interposed with four regiments of dragoons and one of foot, Forster, although everything depended on audacity, would not risk a fight, and barricaded the town of Preston for defence. The first assault of the troops of George was repelled; but next day, on the news of the arrival of General Carpenter with three regiments of dragoons, Forster and his friends weakly decided on surrender, and the whole force laid down their arms—four hundred and sixty-three English volunteers, with seventy-five nobles and gentlemen, and one thousand and five Scotch, with one hundred and forty-three chiefs, nobles, and lairds. A number of half-pay officers who had joined the Pretender were at once shot, while the chief among the rest of the prisoners were marched to London to await their trial for high treason. Forster, it will be remembered, made his escape from Newgate, saving his life, though he lost all else by his attainder, while the unfortunate Derwentwater suffered on Tower Hill. It is said that in his last moments he complained bitterly of the men of Lancashire, who had promised to join the rising, twenty thousand strong. But the gentry of the county, although strongly attached to the Jacobite cause, had too much prudence to join in such an ill-conducted enterprise. And, indeed, it will be found that in the subsequent Jacobite rising of '45, although there were many good Lancashire names concerned in it, yet that these were mostly

younger sons and poor relations, and that few broad acres or ancestral estates were risked in the adventure.

Over Preston Bridge we fairly enter the Lancashire of popular acceptation, the smoky, cindery focus of enterprise and industry. But before descending upon the busy throng of the manufacturing districts, it is worth while to make a pilgrimage towards the upper waters of the Ribble and that wild romantic corner of the county shut in among the outlying spurs of the Pennine range.

Before we come to the hills, however, we may notice Ribchester—not much of a place in itself, but once a Roman station of some importance, and the scene, there is ground for supposing, of one of Arthur's victories over the invading Saxon. A good many Roman antiquities have been found in the neighbourhood, and there is some evidence, in the form of anchors and portions of vessels dug out of the soil, that Ribchester was once a port, and that vessels sailed thus far up the Ribble—a thing difficult of belief at this present day, so utterly un-nautical is the aspect of things now. But popular tradition has preserved a memory of the former importance of the place in the rhyme :

It is written upon a wall in Rome :
Ribchester was as rich as any town in Christendom.

Farther up the Ribble, amidst scenery full of wildness and charm, lie the hill towns of Whalley and Clitheroe. Whalley is rich in the ruins of its old Cistercian abbey—ruins very graceful and beautiful in their abandonment and decay. No wonder that the monks of Whalley clung to their pleasant home among the hills. The last abbot, it will be remembered, was hung for his share in the Pilgrimage of Grace. There is a fine parish church, too, at Whalley—a church that was provided with seats, it is told, soon after the Reformation, by one of the Asshetons—a family that rose upon the ruin of the abbey—with the condition that they should be all free and open, not from notions of Christian equality, but, in the donor's words, to teach the proud wives of Whalley to come early to church ; the notion being that each proud wife would try for the chief place in the synagogue. As nothing is said about the husbands, with their gossiping about the porch and around the alehouse-door, no seats were provided for them, it would seem, and no doubt they gathered in the aisles, kneeling in the straw or upon

the rushes that strewed the floor, according to the season. The annual provision of rushes, by the way, for the use of the parish church in summer time gave rise to a village festival called the Rush-bearing. And still in these secluded corners the festival is kept up—although its meaning is lost sight of—chiefly among children, always tenacious of ancient custom, the youngsters parading the parish with bundles of rushes, curiously tied and twisted up, as a means of extracting coppers from good-natured inhabitants.

In the churchyard of Whalley are several curious incised crosses, recalling the influence of Lindisfarn, and indirectly of Iona—crosses of most curious twisted patterns, that we were wont to call, without any particular reason, Runic. But there is evidence, too, of the influence of the Celtic Church in the names of places and streams. Chadwell is not far off, and Chatburn, the well and the brook both sanctified by St. Chad—and Chad, although he conformed and became Bishop of Lichfield, still owned in heart and spirit the simple Nature-loving influences of his youth.

Whalley, to be accurate, is actually on the Calder, which joins the Ribble a mile or two lower down, while the Hodder flows in from an opposite direction a little above, with Stoneyhurst College not far from the junction. The three rivers conduct to many charming scenes, but mostly in Yorkshire, beyond our county boundary; but as navigable rivers they are not of much account, to judge from the following local rhyme, which may, perhaps, aid flagging memories over geography lessons of principal rivers :

Hodder and Calder, and Ribble and Rain,
All joined together can't carry a bean.

The Rain may be thrown in as a puzzle to the professor, for it is not to be found on the school atlas. Some future traveller may perhaps re-discover it among the outlying spurs of the Pennine hills—unless, indeed, it should prove to be the river that owns the absurd unriver-like name of Roddlesworth, a river that joins the Ribble near Preston, forming at the junction, by the way, a neck of land, with Walton-le-Dale standing thereon—a village whose name, Walltown, has been justified recently by the discovery of a certain Roman station snugly posted there.

To return to our wild corner of Lancashire, where Clitheroe, with its rock fortress, next claims attention. Just such a square rough tower on its rocky eyrie as

you might expect to find in some Indian defile is this, and once a considerable fortress, says the local historian, built in the time of Henry the Second by Robert de Lacy, and that held out for Charles the First in the Civil Wars, and thus earned its final doom of destruction. A sturdy little town too grew up beneath the castle, although the town was there first, no doubt, and the castle was put there to torment and tax it—but a sturdy little town anyhow, with its mayor and corporation, and its member of Parliament; indeed, its pair of members till the time of the Reform Act.

For the rest Clitheroe boasts a good grammar-school, founded by Philip and Mary in 1554, a solitary instance of any good coming from the Spanish marriage. Why Philip and Mary should have taken an interest in the place hardly appears, except that the manor, as part of the appanage of the duchy of Lancaster, was then vested in the Crown, though it was subsequently given away by Charles the Second as a thank-offering to General Monk.

In this hilly corner of Lancashire the people seem to assimilate more closely to the Northumbrian type. Woollen and cotton meet as it were in the clouds, tall chimneys mingle their smoke with the mists that wreath about the hill-tops. A wild romantic region, too, with Pendle Hill as a central beacon, a region once noted for wild superstitions and picturesque, if slightly heathen, faith. Here might congregate the witches in full Sabbath—and the witches of Lancashire have always been famous—jolly witches, too; none of your withered old crones, but winsome and walie, like the wench celebrated in "Tam O'Shanter."

Such a one was Lady Sybil, heiress of Bernshaw Tower, a small fortified house of which the foundations can still be traced, standing near the lonely Eagle's Crag some five miles from Burnley. Young, rich, and beautiful, Lady Sybil joined the corps of Lancashire witches, and preferred the exciting practices of the black art to all the attentions of human lovers. One of these last, a certain Lord William, of Hopton Tower—the tower a rival fortalice to Bernshaw—undismayed by the lassie's evil reputation, resolved to possess her, witch or no witch. Making no impression on her with sighs and words, he took council of a certain Mother Helston, a famous witch of the period—the exact date not being specified by history. Mother

Helston, with a sad want of esprit de corps, stood Lord William's friend, and promised success. He had only to wait till All-hallowe'en, and then turn out with hounds and horn, and trust to arts infernal. On that day accordingly he sallied forth a hunting. Presently a milk-white doe started from a brake, and hounds and horsemen darted off in hot pursuit. Over hill and dale the white doe led a break-neck chase, never bating speed, till night approached, and the beaten hounds dropped off one by one. Presently the diminished pack was joined by a strange hound of diabolic mien, from which the other dogs shrank away, and the chase was continued by the strange hound and Lord William alone. The white doe struggled on, but panting and exhausted, till the Eagle's Crag was reached, with Bernshaw Tower in view. But the poor white doe, as she crossed the Eagle's Crag, was reached and pulled down by the red-eyed hound of Satan—Mother Helston herself or her familiar. Lord William hastened up, and disregarding the pleading of the dark eyes, filled with tears, of the palpitating milk-white bosom, threw a silken leash about the white doe's neck and led her in triumph to his home in Hopton Tower. With morn the enchantment was spent, and the fair heiress of Bernshaw stood revealed in her proper form, and at the mercy of her henceforth lord and master. Marriage for a time cured the Lady Sybil of her wild unhallowed ways, but she could not long refrain from the delight of the black art, and we find her presently enjoying a frolic at Cliviger Mill in the form of a beautiful white cat, when Robin, the servant at the mill, cruelly slashed one pretty white paw with his knife. Next morning Lady Sybil was found in bed with a wounded wrist, and although she was sufficiently mistress of the craft to restore the severed hand, yet there was always a thin red line about her wrist to testify to the terrible secret. Not long after, she died, and tradition says that she was buried under the Eagle's Crag, and on Allhallowe'en the hounds and milk-white doe and huntsmen are still to be seen urging the wild chase as darkness gathers over the scene.

It would be worth anybody's while to test the truth of this legend by visiting the beautiful ravines branching off from the great gorge of Cliviger—in the decline of autumn, we will say, with the light of a wild lurid sunset over the scene—even if

he caught no glimpse of the milk-white doe and heard no echo of the hunter's horn.

Another old legend may be recalled of this wild corner of Lancashire—the spectre of Wyecoller Hall, about three miles east of Coln, near the Yorkshire borders. The hall is now deserted and in ruins, but, deserted by the living, it is still frequented by the spectres of the dead. The spectre horseman of Wyecoller Hall is not regular in his appearance, but it is always on a dark tempestuous night—the darkest and most tempestuous of the whole year—that the ring of his horse's hoofs is heard in the distance. The horseman dashes up the road at full speed, thundering over the narrow bridge that spans the rivulet. Suddenly the horse is reined back on his haunches at the door of the hall; the horseman alights, a figure in peaked hat and high boots—alights, enters, and strides furiously up the stairs. Doleful screams are heard, subsiding into smothered groans; then all is silence, till again the mad rush of hoofs goes by, presently dying away in the distance. Tradition goes on to say that long ago, in the early Stuart period, one of the Cunliffes, then owners of the hall, thus killed his wife, detected in some intrigue, and galloped off, to appear no more as long as life lasted, but condemned in the spirit evermore to re-enact the tragic scene till judgment day.

Few are left now to talk of this ancient lore. The small towns of the district, Colne Burnley or Padiham, have been changed and transformed by the cotton manufacture, and have nothing to say to old wives' stories. Burnley, indeed, has Towneley Hall in its neighbourhood, the grand old seat of a fine old Lancashire family. It was Colonel Towneley who marched at the head of his officers of the Manchester Regiment to the scaffold on Kennington Green after the suppression of the rising of 1745, and it was a common belief that the hero of Culloden, who might well have saved this gallant soldier, was haunted thenceforth by his ghost. Better known, perhaps, is Charles Towneley, the virtuoso, whose collection of classic marbles was purchased for the British Museum. Through the grounds of Towneley Hall runs the little river Calder, which rises not far from here, and within a short distance from its source is the head-spring of another Calder, which finds its way *through the fine valley of Todmorden, the grand gateway between east and west,*

and so, through the heart of Yorkshire, to the German Ocean.

A marvellous and interesting sight are the busy stirring manufacturing towns among the hills, giving a notion of the indomitable energy and industry of the race that has created so much wealth and prosperity out of such unpromising materials. Among these hills the manufacture took its origin and gradually descended towards the plains—a manufacture of woollen fabric originally like that of Yorkshire, and not so much the result of natural advantages; for in the beginning coal and iron were insignificant elements in the production—not so much then the result of favouring conditions as of a natural adaptability of the race that occupied these regions. All along the borders of the hills from the banks of the Trent to the banks of the Clyde we find the same industrious people, who must find something for their hands to do. Adam delves and Eve spins, or if she can't spin she knits. The woman, by the way, is generally much more indefatigable and energetic than her mate, and in these northern regions it is the active energy of the woman that has brought to light the infant manufacture. Still it is of no use for Eve to spin unless she has somebody to weave for her, and thus Adam is set to work at the loom, and gradually deserts his delving for the more profitable pursuit. And for long years the hand-loom brought a comfortable substantial prosperity to country workers in their own homes, and of these humble-workers—with their little crofts and gardens, and the murmur of the brook and the hum of bees mingling with the clack of the loom—generations passed happily away, before the mule and the power-loom revolutionised the industry, and while making here and there a millionaire and M.P. of the son of a weaver, brought the general population under the transforming influence of town life and factory labour.

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXII. THE LAST OF MR. GREY.

"I HAVE put in my last appearance at the old chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields," said Mr. Grey, on arriving home one day early in June.

"Papa, you don't mean it," said Dolly.

"I do. Why not one day as well as

another? I made up my mind that it was to be so. I have been thinking of it for the last six weeks. It is done now."

"But you have not told me."

"Well, yes; I have told you all that was necessary. It has come now a little sudden; that is all."

"You will never go back again?"

"Well; I may look in. Mr. Barry will be lord and master."

"At any rate he won't be my lord and master," said Dolly, showing by the tone of her voice that the matter had been again discussed by them since the last conversation which was recorded, and had been settled to her father's satisfaction.

"No; you at least will be left to me. But the fact is, I cannot have any further dealings with the affairs of Mr. Scarborough. The old man who is dead was too many for me. Though I call him old, he was ever so much younger than I am. Barry says he was the best lawyer he ever knew. As things go now a man has to be accounted a fool if he attempts to run straight. Barry does not tell me that I have been a fool, but he clearly thinks so."

"Do you care what Mr. Barry thinks or says?"

"Yes, I do—in regard to the professional position which I hold. He is confident that Mountjoy Scarborough is his father's eldest legitimate son, and he believes that the old squire simply was anxious to supersede him to get some cheap arrangement made as to the debts."

"I suppose that was the case before."

"But what am I to think of such a man? Mr. Barry speaks of him almost with affection. How am I to get on with such a man as Mr. Barry?"

"He himself is honest."

"Well; yes, I believe so. But he does not hate the absolute, utter roguery of our own client. And that is not quite all. When the story of the Rummelsburg marriage was told I did not believe one word of it, and I said so most strongly. I did not at first believe the story that there had been no such marriage, and I swore to Mr. Scarborough that I would protect Mountjoy and Mountjoy's creditors against any such scheme as that which was intended. Then I was convinced. All the details of the Nice marriage were laid before me. It was manifest that the lady had submitted to be married in a public manner and with all regular forms, while she had a baby as it were in her arms. And I got all the dates. Taking that marriage for granted,

Mountjoy was clearly illegitimate, and I was driven so to confess. Then I took up arms on behalf of Augustus. Augustus was a thoroughly bad fellow—a bully, and a tyrant; but he was the eldest son. Then came the question of paying the debts. I thought it a very good thing that the debts should be paid in the proposed fashion. The men were all to get the money they had actually lent, and no better arrangement seemed to be probable. I helped in that, feeling that it was all right. But it was a swindle that I was made to assist in. Of course it was a swindle, if the Rummelsburg marriage be true, and all these creditors think that I have been a party to it. Then I swore that I wouldn't believe the Rummelsburg marriage. But Barry and the rest of them only shake their heads and laugh, and I am told that Mr. Scarborough was the best lawyer among us!"

"What does it matter? How can that hurt you?" asked Dolly.

"It does hurt me. That is the truth. I have been at my business long enough. Another system has grown up which does not suit me. I feel that they all can put their fingers in my eyes. It may be that I am a fool, and that my idea of honesty is a mistake."

"No!" shouted Dolly.

"I heard of a rich American the other day who had been poor, and was asked how he had suddenly become so well off. 'I found a partner,' said the American, 'and we went into business together. He had the capital, and I had the experience. We just made a change. He has the experience now, and I have the capital.' When I hear that story I want to strip his coat off the wretch's back, but Mr. Barry would give him a fine fur cloak as a mark of respect. When I find that clever rascals are respectable, I think it is time that I should give up work altogether."

Thus it was that Mr. Grey left the house of Grey and Barry, driven to premature retirement by the vices, or rather frauds, of old Mr. Scarborough. When Augustus went to work, which he did immediately on his father's death, to wrest the property from the hands of his brother,—or what part of the property might be possible,—Mr. Grey absolutely declined to have anything to do with the case. Mr. Barry explained how impossible it was that the house, even for its own sake, should absolutely secede from all consideration of the question. Mountjoy had been left in pos-

session, and according to all the evidence now before them was the true owner. Of course he would want a solicitor, and, as Mr. Barry said, would be very well able to pay for what he wanted. It was necessary that the firm should protect themselves against the vindictiveness of Mr. Tyrrwhit and Samuel Hart. Should the firm fail to do so, it would leave itself open to all manner of evil calumnies. The firm had been so long employed on behalf of the Scarboroughs that now, when the old squire was dead, it could not afford to relinquish the business till this final great question had been settled. It was necessary, as Mr. Barry said, that they should see it out, Mr. Barry taking a much more leading part in these discussions than had been his wont. Consequently Mr. Grey had told him that he might do it himself, —and Mr. Barry had been quite contented. Mr. Barry, in talking the matter over with one of the clerks, whom he afterwards took into partnership, expressed his opinion that "poor old Grey was altogether off the hooks." "Old Grey" had always been Mr. Grey when spoken of by Mr. Barry till that day, and the clerk, remarking this, left Mr. Grey's bell unanswered for three or four minutes. Mr. Grey, though he was quite willing to shelve himself, understood it all, and knocked them about in the chambers that afternoon with unwonted severity. He said nothing about it when he came home that evening; but the next day was the last on which he took his accustomed chair.

"What will you do with yourself, papa?" Dolly said to him the next morning.

"Do with myself?"

"What employment will you take in hand? One has to think of that, and to live accordingly. If you would like to turn farmer, we must live in the country."

"Certainly I shall not do that. I need not absolutely throw away what money I have saved."

"Or if you were fond of shooting or hunting?"

"You know very well I never shot a bird and hardly ever crossed a horse in my life."

"But you are fond of gardening."

"Haven't I got garden enough here?"

"Quite enough if you think so; but will there be occupation sufficient in that to find you employment for all your life?"

"I shall read."

"It seems to me," she said, "that reading becomes wearisome as an only pursuit,

unless you've made yourself accustomed to it."

"Sha'n't I have as much employment as you?"

"A woman is so different! Darning will get through an unlimited number of hours. A new set of underclothing will occupy me for a fortnight. Turning the big girls' dresses over there into frocks for the little girls is sufficient to keep my mind in employment for a month. Then I have the maid-servants to look after and to guard against their lovers. I have the dinners to provide, and to see that the cook does not give the fragments to the policeman. I have been brought up to do these things, and habit has made them usual occupations to me. I never envied you when you had to encounter all Mr. Scarborough's vagaries; but I knew that they sufficed to give you something to do."

"They have sufficed," said he, "to leave me without anything that I can do."

"You must not allow yourself to be so left. You must find out some employment." Then they sat silent for a time, while Mr. Grey occupied himself with some of the numerous papers which it would be necessary that he should hand over to Mr. Barry. "And now," said Dolly, "Mr. Carroll will have gone out, and I will go over to the terrace. I have to see them every day, and Mr. Carroll has the decency to take himself off to some billiard-table so as to make room for me."

"What are they doing about that man?" said Mr. Grey.

"About the lover? Mr. Juniper has, I fancy, made himself extremely disagreeable, not satisfying himself with abusing you and me; but poor aunt as well, and all the girls. He has, I fancy, got some money of his own."

"He has had money paid to him by Captain Scarborough; but that I should fancy would rather make him in a good humour than the reverse."

"He is only in a good humour, I take it, when he has something to get. However, I must be off now, or the legitimate period of Uncle Carroll's absence will be over."

Mr. Grey, when he was left alone, at once gave up the manipulation of his papers, and throwing himself back into his chair, began to think of that future life of which he had talked so easily to his daughter. What should he do with himself? He believed that he could manage with his books for two hours a day; but

even of that he was not sure. He much doubted whether for many years past the time devoted to reading in his own house had amounted to one hour a day. He thought that he could employ himself in the garden for two hours; but that would fail him when there should be hail, or fierce sunshine, or frost, or snow, or rain. Eating and drinking would be much to him; but he could not but look forward to self-reproach if eating and drinking were to be the joy of his life. Then he thought of Dolly's life,—how much purer, and better, and nobler it had been than his own. She talked in a slighting, careless tone of her usual day's work, but how much of her time had been occupied in doing the tasks of others. He knew well that she disliked the Carrolls. She would speak of her own dislike of them as of her great sin, of which it was necessary that she should repent in sackcloth and ashes. But yet how she worked for the family! turning old dresses into new frocks, as though the girls who had worn them, and the children who were to wear them, had been to her her dearest friends. Every day she went across to the house intent upon doing good offices; and this was the repentance in sackcloth and ashes which she exacted from herself. Could not he do as she did? He could not darn Minnie's and Brenda's stockings, but he might do something to make those children more worthy of their cousin's care. He could not associate with his brother-in-law, because he was sure that Mr. Carroll would not endure his society; but he might labour to do something for the reform even of this abominable man. Before Dolly had come back to him he had resolved that he could only redeem his life from the stagnation with which it was threatened by working for others, now that the work of his own life had come to a close. "Well, Dolly," he said, as soon as she had entered the room, "have you heard anything more about Mr. Juniper?"

"Have you been here ever since, papa?"

"Yes, indeed; I used to sit at chambers for six or seven hours at a stretch, almost without getting out of my chair."

"And are you still employed about those awful papers?"

"I have not looked at them since you left the room."

"Then you must have been asleep."

"No, indeed; I have not been asleep. You left me too much to think of to enable me to sleep. What am I to do with myself besides eating and drinking, so that I

shall not sleep always, on this side of the grave?"

"There are twenty things, papa—thirty, fifty, for a man so minded as you are." This she said trying to comfort him.

"I must endeavour to find one or two of the fifty." Then he went back to his papers, and really worked hard that day.

On the following morning, early, he went across to Bolsover Terrace, to begin his task of reforming the Carroll family, without saying a word to Dolly indicative of his purpose. He found that the task would be difficult, and as he went he considered within his mind how best it might be accomplished. He had put a prayer-book in his pocket, without giving it much thought; but before he knocked at the door he had assured himself that the prayer-book would not be of avail. He would not know how to begin to use it, and felt that it would be ridiculed. He must leave that to Dolly or to the clergyman. He could talk to the girls; but they would not care about the affairs of the firm; and, in truth, he did not know what they would care about. With Dolly he could hold sweet converse as long as she would remain with him. But he had been present at the bringing up of Dolly, and did think that gifts had been given to Dolly which had not fallen to the lot of the Carroll girls. "They all want to be married," he said to himself, "and that at any rate is a legitimate desire."

With this he knocked at the door, and when it was opened by Sophia, he found an old gentleman with black cotton gloves and a doubtful white cravat just preparing for his departure. There was Amelia, then giving him his hat and looking as proper as though she had never been winked at by Prince Chitakov. Then the mother came through from the parlour into the passage. "Oh, John;—how very kind of you to come. Mr. Matterson, pray let me introduce you to my brother, Mr. Grey. John, this is the Rev. Mr. Matterson, a clergyman who is a very intimate friend of Amelia."

"Me! ma! Why me in particular?"

"Well, my dear, because it is so. I suppose it is so because Mr. Matterson likes you the best."

"Laws, ma; what nonsense." Mr. Matterson appeared to be a very shy gentleman, and only anxious to escape from the hall door. But Mr. Grey remembered that in former days, before the coming of Mr. Juniper upon the scene, he had heard of a

clerical admirer. He had been told that the gentleman's name was Matterson, that he was not very young nor very rich, that he had five or six children, and that he could afford to marry if the wife could bring with her about one hundred pounds a year. He had not then thought much of Mr. Matterson, and no direct appeal had been made to him. After that Mr. Juniper had come forward, and then Mr. Juniper had been altogether abolished. But it occurred to Mr. Grey, that Mr. Matterson was at any rate better than Mr. Juniper; that he was by profession a gentleman, and that here might be a beginning of those good deeds by which he was so anxious to make the evening of his days bearable to himself.

"I am delighted to make Mr. Matterson's acquaintance," he said, as that old gentleman scrambled out of the door.

Then his sister took him by the arm and led him at once into the parlour. "You might as well come and hear what I have to say, Amelia." So the daughter followed them in. "He is the most praiseworthy gentleman you ever knew, John," began Mrs. Carroll.

"A clergyman, I think."

"Oh yes; he is in orders,—in priest's orders," said Mrs. Carroll, meaning to make the most of Mr. Matterson. "He has a church over at Putney."

"I am glad of that," said Mr. Grey.

"Yes, indeed; though it isn't very good, because it's only a curate's one hundred and fifty pounds! Yes; he does have one hundred and fifty pounds, and something out of the surplice fees."

"Another one hundred pounds I believe it is," said Amelia.

"Not quite so much as that, my dear, but it is something."

"He is a widower with children, I believe," said Mr. Grey.

"There are children,—five of them; the prettiest little dears one ever saw. The eldest is just about thirteen." This was a fib, because Mrs. Carroll knew that the eldest boy was sixteen; but what did it signify? "Amelia is so warmly attached to them."

"It's a settled thing then?"

"We do hope so. It cannot be said to be quite settled because there are always money difficulties. Poor Mr. Matterson must have some increase to his income before he can afford it."

"Ah yes."

"You did say something, uncle, about five hundred pounds," said Amelia.

"Four hundred and fifty, my dear," said Mr. Grey.

"Oh, I had forgotten. I did say that I hoped there would be five hundred."

"There shall be five hundred," said Mr. Grey, remembering that now had come the time for doing to one of the Carroll family the good things of which he had thought to himself. "As Mr. Matterson is a clergyman of whom I have heard nothing but good, it shall be five hundred." He had in truth heard nothing either good or bad respecting Mr. Matterson.

Then he asked Amelia to take a walk with him as he went home, reflecting that now had come the time in which a little wholesome conversation might have its effect. And an idea entered his head that in his old age an acquaintance with a neighbouring clergyman might be salutary to himself. So Amelia got her bonnet and walked home with him.

"Is he an eloquent preacher, my dear?" But Amelia had never heard him preach. "I suppose there will be plenty for you to do in your new home."

"I don't mean to be put upon, if you mean that, uncle."

"But five children!"

"There is a servant who looks after them. Of course I shall have to see to Mr. Matterson's own things, but I have told him that I cannot slave for them all. The three eldest have to be sent somewhere; that has been agreed upon. He has got an unmarried sister who can quite afford to do as much as that." Then she explained her reasons for the marriage. "Papa is getting to be quite unbearable, and Sophy spoils him in everything."

Poor Mr. Grey, when his niece turned and went back home, thought that, as far as the girl was concerned, or her future household, there would be very little room for employment for him. Mr. Matterson wanted an upper servant who, instead of demanding wages, would bring a little money with her, and he could not but feel that the poor clergyman would find that he had taken into his house a bad and expensive upper servant.

"Never mind, papa," said Dolly; "we will go on and persevere, and, if we intend to do good, good will certainly come of it."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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JENIFER.

BY ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. FENDER CUDLIP).

CHAPTER III. "RING OUT THE OLD."

AS everyone had anticipated, it was found, when the will was read, that the late Mr. Ray had left the whole of the Moor Royal property to his eldest son. And as the Moor Royal property was valued at about two thousand five hundred pounds a year, it was naturally assumed by everyone that the eldest son and his wife had every reason to be perfectly well satisfied.

Greatly to the astonishment of all and sundry it was found that the widow was left with two hundred a year only, and on this pittance she had to maintain herself and daughter, for Jenifer was only mentioned in her father's will as the one who was to inherit the two hundred a year at her mother's death. As for Jack, the son, who had not been brought up to any profession, and who had spent his grown-up years in doing nothing more remunerative than superintending the management of the stables and home-farm, he was the inheritor of three thousand pounds and his father's favourite hunter only.

"It was an iniquitous will," indignant partisans of the widow and younger children said. "For a woman who had enjoyed a well-filled purse and a large income for twenty-six years, to be suddenly reduced to what would be penury to her, was a cruel caprice of which no one had ever deemed it possible Mr. Ray could be guilty. She had been a loved and trusted wife. He had never checked her expenditure. He had never regarded anything as too costly where she and their daughter had been concerned. And now he had left her in poverty, and Jenifer penniless."

It was a hard and cruel blow, and, when

it fell upon her first, it crushed out of her mind the memory of a sealed letter which was also mentioned in the will. But this was of little consequence, Jenifer and Jack said. The sealed letter left in the lawyer's hands, to be delivered up to Hubert when he had been three years in possession of the property, could concern Hubert only.

For a time "old Mrs. Ray," as she soon came to be called, was not at all alive to the redeeming feature in the otherwise unjust will, which was this, namely, that her husband had desired that she and Jenifer should have a home at Moor Royal with Hubert so long as either of them desired it. And additionally, that should the widow leave Moor Royal, she should have the right to claim and take away so much of the furniture as she thought proper.

But though the widow was partially oblivious of this compensating clause, Mrs. Hubert Ray was keenly alive to it, and its consequences. Though her father-in-law had been ignorant of her existence, she regarded it as a wicked piece of personal injustice to herself that he should have hampered the inheritance of Moor Royal with any such condition. It dimmed her glory as mistress of Moor Royal that her husband's mother should still seem to have a right in the place; and that Jenifer should be there, free to move about and perhaps use and order things as she had been accustomed to do all her life, was an open and smarting wound to the wife of the reigning power.

She was still in the very early days of her sovereignty when she determined to say a word to Jenifer, which should show her that her mother and herself were far from welcome residents at Moor Royal. She knew that in the saying of this word

she must exercise tact and taste, otherwise Hubert might hear a sound of it that would not be pleasant to his ears.

Her sway over him was almost unlimited—almost, but not entirely. Where his mother and sister were concerned, it was quite possible that he might hold an adverse opinion to his wife. There would be both difficulty and risk, she feared, in dislodging old Mrs. Ray.

She sat over the fire in her own room two days after the funeral and the hearing of that will which had wrought such a change in her fortunes. It was the best bedroom in the house, lighted by a large deep bay-window filled with quaint old painted glass. There was a good deal of heavy magnificence about the furniture and appointments of the room, and its air of comfort was indisputable. Still, she longed to weed out many things, notably the massive old four-poster and the huge Spanish mahogany wardrobe.

"In fact, the only thing I'll keep here will be this duck of an old brass fender, and I'll furnish up to that," she was thinking when Jenifer, after knocking at the door, came in.

Jenifer's eyes had shed many scalding tears during the last few days, but they were clear and sweet as ever now when she came up to the long deep old chair in which her sister-in-law was burrowing.

Mrs. Ray looked at her critically, and began calculating the probabilities of an early marriage on Jenifer's part, "Which would vastly improve the situation for me. The old lady can't work on Hubert as this girl can," she thought, as she moved her dress aside and indicated that Jenifer might take a seat near the fire.

"I came to tell you that mother is coming down to dinner to-night, Effie," Jenifer began, disregarding the proffered chair.

Mrs. Hubert stretched her slender feet out nearer to the fire, and yawned.

"Hubert said something to me about it just now, and do you know, Jenifer, I strongly advised him to persuade her not to do it. Has he spoken to her?"

"Hubert would hardly advise mother to shut herself away from her children," Jenifer said quickly.

"But don't you know—haven't I told you that Mr. Jervoise and Flora will be here to dinner?" Mrs. Hubert said carelessly.

"Oh, surely, surely not," Jenifer cried out; "our father just dead, our grief for him so new, so fresh. You can't have

brought strangers upon us now, you can't have forgotten that mother is broken-hearted!"

"That's only a phrase, Jenifer. Flora and I made up our minds long ago to weed out all such senseless exaggerated phraseology from our talk. And Flora is my sister, so I can't regard her husband and herself as strangers."

Mrs. Hubert Ray resettled herself complacently in her chair as she spoke, and looked at her sister-in-law with steady unflinching eyes. Silently, in such sorrow as she had never known before, Jenifer went back to her mother.

"It will be hard to check her brave attempt, but mother mustn't go down to meet those heartless people." This was Jenifer's first thought. Then she reminded herself that "these heartless people" knew nothing whatever about her mother, or the trouble that had befallen the Rays. And, remembering this, she grew just.

"Mother shall do exactly as she pleases, and if Effie and her people are nice, I'll help mother to see how nice they are," the girl thought bravely as she hesitated a moment at her mother's door. Then she went in, prepared to bear her part of the burden, however heavy it might be.

"Mother darling, dinner's at eight to-night, and Effie's sister will be here. She seems very fond of her sister; Mrs. Jervoise has been so good and generous to Effie, Hubert says."

Mrs. Ray sighed. In Jenifer's effort to speak calmly, and make the best of things, the poor widow heard the first warning note of the change that was to come. She was no longer the first object of consideration at Moor Royal. Effie's sister was coming inopportunistically enough. But sorrow must be laid aside in her presence, for the sake of peace and pleasantness.

It was the first time since her husband's death, that the woman who had been mistress of Moor Royal for the larger half of her life, had come down to dinner with her children. The visitors, Mr. and Mrs. Jervoise, had arrived, and been thoroughly instructed as to the will case by young Mrs. Ray. But, with the exception of their presence, everything was so exactly similar to what it had been dozens of times when Hubert had been at home, and some young lady guest staying in the house, that old Mrs. Ray could surely claim forgiveness for treating Effie as a guest, and taking her accustomed seat at the head of the table.

But the young ruling power was on the alert. At a sign from Mrs. Jervoise, Hubert's wife swept swiftly up to the high-backed chair on which her mother-in-law had just seated herself, and bending down, she whispered:

"Hadn't I better begin to save you trouble at once, by taking my proper place?" Then aloud she added: "Hubert, give your arm to your mother, and take her to her place; how negligent you are. Flora, you must take him in hand again, or he will get quite rough and brusque in this retirement."

"He has never been either rough or brusque yet, but he may get cold and polished as steel under able hands," Jenifer said, forgetting for a moment that resolution of hers to keep the peace, and make the best of things at any price.

"Don't you think polish preferable to rust, Miss Ray?" Mrs. Jervoise asked, glancing and smiling amiably from the seat in which she had been placed on the right hand of the host.

Mrs. Jervoise was an older edition of Mrs. Hubert Ray, a little harder perhaps, on closer observation, but equally slim, supple, self-confident, and agreeable to beholders at first sight.

Her husband was at least thirty years her senior, but she carefully guarded against being forced into the folly of taking the place of an old man's darling. She always was ready to seem to adapt herself to his habits, views, and whims. But in reality she trained him judiciously and unceasingly, and the habits, views, and whims that were studied and consulted in their household were hers.

It was a great triumph to her that she had succeeded in marrying her sister Effie so well. Effie had been her glory and trial for four or five years before Hubert Ray came and solved the difficulty for anxious Flora. Effie had no parents, no money, and no inclination to strive to maintain herself in the overcrowded governess ranks. On the other hand, Effie loved good horses, good dress, and good society. All these she had in her brother-in-law's house. And all these she had at one time seemed ready to relinquish at the suit of a detrimental.

But that danger was successfully passed in these days of which we are writing, and Effie had married wisely and well. Her husband possessed everything in the way of position and manner that a socially ambitious woman could desire, and the Moor Royal

property made the wife of its owner a county power.

Still there were drawbacks. There were a mother-in-law and a sister-in-law, and a sealed letter. This last was the worst of all three in Mrs. Jervoise's eyes, for it could not "be offended or hurt out of the way," as she said to Effie when discussing these drawbacks to domestic, or rather social felicity.

"It will be your own fault if you don't make the old lady and the girl feel that they'll be happier in a house of their own, Effie," Mrs. Jervoise said to her sister during a brief after-dinner chat; "but the letter! No tact can abolish the fact of the existence of that letter. It may be—well, it's no use suggesting what it may be, because all suggestions will probably go wide of the mark. But if I were you I'd never be anything but very kind to Jack Ray, till you know what's in that letter."

"Jack is very good-natured, it's easy enough to be kind to him," Mrs. Ray replied, stirring the coals of her bedroom fire with the toe of her beaded shoe.

"Well, if you're wise you'll be more than kind to Jack; take trouble with him, educate his tastes, make him proud of you, make him less reliant than he is now on his mother and sister. In fact, get Jack on your side so completely that whatever happens he will be your friend."

"I wish you'd say plainly what you're aiming at, Flora!" Mrs. Ray exclaimed impatiently. "Hubert and I are independent of every one; the only good I can ever gain from Jack would be that hunter which his father left to him—most unjustly, I think, for Hubert's the eldest son, and the best horse in the stable belongs to him by right."

"I should leave Mr. Jack in possession of the hunter till he offers it to you freely, as he will if you manage him properly. I know what these gawks of boys are, and so ought you to know by this time. Now we had better go down, before the family have time to find flaws in us, and indicate the situation of them to Hubert."

It was not an agreeable evening to any one of the party. Perhaps Mr. Jervoise made the best of it, for he slept with quiet unbroken persistence from the minute he entered the drawing-room till the longed-for moment arrived when bedroom candles were brought in, and they were free to disperse and go to bed. This was a habit that had been formed under Mrs. Jervoise's direct personal influence, Flora having a

habit of leaving her husband to unbroken repose four or five nights out of every seven that they spent in town during the season.

According to an old custom of theirs, Jenifer and Hubert sat down to chess. They were good and fairly-matched players; but this night Jenifer's thoughts and eyes kept on wandering to her mother, who sat apart from the others absorbed in her own reflections. She held some knitting in her hands—a black silk sock that had been begun before her husband's death, and been intended for him. But she never seemed to pause; the needles moved falteringly, and the rows increased slowly.

It was a relief to her that the two sisters left her undisturbed, and devoted themselves exclusively to one another, and to some new songs which Mrs. Jervoise had brought down from London. They made a pretty picture at the piano, these two fair sisters who were both so cold and radiant in their golden-haired, fair whiteness. Even their dresses conveyed the impression of starlight. For though young Mrs. Ray had put on mourning for her husband's father, she mourned for him to-night in a dress of dull white Indian silk covered with a network of white bugles. While Mrs. Jervoise looked like the Spirit of Foam of the Sea in clouds of snowy cobweb-like lace.

They made such a pretty picture that Jenifer found it easy to pardon Hubert for the lax interest he took in his game, and for the frequency of the long and lingering glances which he levelled at his wife. But she could not so easily forgive him for his forgetfulness of their mother.

"Don't you think we have left mother to her own thoughts long enough?" she whispered, when he proposed another game.

"No; she's interested in hearing those girls," he said complacently. "Effie's voice is in splendid order to-night; she deserves a better piano, and shall have it soon. Come over to them if you'll have no more chess. I haven't heard you sing since I've been home, Jenny; try something now."

She shook her head, but dared not trust her voice to speak.

"Jenny dear, you must break the ice some time," he said kindly, taking her hand, and his tones and gestures overwhelmed her. The tears flashed into her eyes, and a sob which she could not control betrayed her emotion to all in the room.

"Jenifer, my darling, what is it?" her mother cried, rising hastily, and coming forward to her daughter.

"I think Miss Ray is hysterical for want of fresh air," Mrs. Jervoise said, wheeling round on the music-stool. "I hear she has not been out for days and days; young people can't stand want of fresh air."

"It's not that, it's not—I'm not hysterical," Jenifer cried, mastering herself at once.

"What is it then?" Mrs. Ray asked carelessly.

"Nothing—except that I'm a fool," Jenifer said quickly; and with a half-smile and a little shrug of the shoulders, Mrs. Ray dismissed the subject, and turned to the piano.

"I wonder where Jack is?" Hubert said by way of a diversion.

"In the study, reading *The Field*, most likely," Mrs. Ray remarked. Then she sprang up from the music-stool, saying she would go and look for him.

"I think Jack confines his literary studies almost exclusively to *The Field*, doesn't he?" Hubert laughed. "What a fellow he is for sport of all kinds, to be sure. Effie was saying to-day I had better give him the refusal of the home-farm; he'll never be happy at a clerk's desk."

"Has there been any thought of his taking a clerkship, poor boy?" his mother asked pityingly.

"I suggested to Jack that he ought to do something, mother," Jenifer put in; "you wouldn't have him live in idleness, and waste his substance."

"His tastes are all for the country, poor boy," his mother went on; "such a boy for horses, and dogs, and guns," she added in an explanatory tone to Mrs. Jervoise; "while Hubert here has always been one for a London life and London amusements—theatres, and balls, and clubs; and now, you see, Hubert's lot is cast in the country, and it's likely that poor Jack's will be cast in London."

"Not altogether a bad job for Jack, I'm thinking, mother dear; we shouldn't like him to be a mere sportsman, and nothing else," Jenifer said cheerfully.

She was very fond of her younger brother, reasonably and sensibly fond of him, not blindly devoted to him as she had been to Hubert. It grieved her often to think that Jack's sporting propensities might lead him into society in which he would deteriorate, as she had heard of other young country gentlemen deteriorating.

"Then you don't think it would be a good thing for Jack to take the home-farm, Jenny?" Mr. Ray asked disappointedly.

"No, Hubert, I don't think I should like the idea of Jack being tenant at the home-farm," Jenifer said decidedly, though she felt her expression of opinion was giving annoyance to her brother. "He wouldn't have working interest there sufficiently large or engrossing to keep him from wasting a great deal of time."

"I am surprised at you, the daughter of a hunting squire, speaking of hunting and sport generally as waste of time," Mrs. Jervoise put in.

"I won't argue, but I feel that the squire may properly and reasonably do many things that the small tenant-farmer may not," Jenifer said good-humouredly, though she thought that Mrs. Jervoise had little right to intermeddle in Ray matters.

"I am sorry you're against it, Jenny," Hubert said hesitatingly. "Effie and I both thought it such a good thing, as it was an arrangement that would keep Jack near us and yet make him quite independent, that I've already offered it to him."

"And he?"

"Has accepted the offer, naturally enough it seems to me," Mr. Ray said, forcing himself to speak cheerfully. "You're glad, are you not, mother? You'll be pleased to have Jack settled at the home-farm?"

"With a nice rich wife; it's the duty of all poor young men to marry nice rich wives, and I'm sure Effie will try to make Mr. Jack do his duty in that respect," Mrs. Jervoise interposed. "Won't you, Effie?" she added as Mrs. Ray entered at the moment.

"You couldn't tear Jack away from The Field, Effie?" her husband asked laughingly.

"He wasn't with The Field to be torn away. The study was empty, and The Field uncut. Where can he be? How rude of him to go away the first night Mr. Jervoise and Flora are here. Really, Mrs. Ray, you have not brought up your sons to be polite enough to ladies; we had dreadful trouble even with Hugh at first, hadn't we, Flora? He used at one time actually to have the assurance to put his professional duties before our pleasure. Imagine it! fancy a partner in a great Government contracting company's house, letting himself be fettered by business considerations!"

Mrs. Ray threw up her head as she spoke, and looked very bright and bewildering. She talked folly truly, but she talked it attractively, and even those who felt the folly of it most keenly were fascinated into listening to her.

"Hubert was only a junior partner, you must remember," old Mrs. Ray said apologetically, "and there was some hitch about the payment of the money that was to secure him even that position. You see my poor husband was not quite satisfied as to its being the best thing for Hubert after all, and so, though he had such a great deal of capital in it, I think he would have wished Hubert to get out of it, even if circumstances had not rendered it incumbent on Hubert to come home to Moor Royal."

The poor bereft lady explained as much as she knew of the state of the case, so sweetly and gently, that Effie restrained her mirth. She knew—none better—that her husband's share of the business of the firm of which he was a junior partner, was already worth as much to him as the Moor Royal property.

"But if the old lady knew that, she might work on him to be absurdly generous to his sister and brother," the astute Effie reflected. And as it seemed to her an idle waste of the good things that were hers by law now, that they should go to the good of a couple of people who could never benefit her, young Mrs. Ray resolved that the offer of the home-farm should be the best boon bestowed upon Jack by his brother. While as for Jenifer, "her face is a fortune if she only invests it properly; and if she does, what a useful woman she'll be to me by-and-by, Flora."

"Yes," Mrs. Jervoise answered, "Miss Jenifer Ray has got a good deal of old-fashioned family feeling about her. She will always be staunch to her brothers, and she'll make handsome presents to her nephews and nieces, and she'll help to nurse anyone of you that may be ill. But you'll never deceive her, Effie, and she'll never like you. Take my advice: keep straight with Jack, and don't waste powder and shot on the others."

"Jack isn't much of a home-bird; he doesn't give me many opportunities of playing guardian angel to him of an evening."

"Where does he go?"

"To the harness-room to smoke, and sometimes to the vicarage to flirt, I suppose."

"The vicar has daughters?"

"No, he hasn't, but his wife is young and pretty, and has young and pretty friends staying with her very often. My dear Flora, why should I care a penny whether Jack falls a prey to one of these young women or not?"

"I'll never hint that you need care after

that glad day closes that makes known the contents of the sealed letter which the lawyer holds; and oh, I'd forgotten! who is the lawyer? What is he like; old and a fogey, or——"

"Young and beguiling? He's neither, Flora, he's worse than either."

NEW GUINEA.

It is probable that the recent announcement of the action of the Queensland Government, and the discussion which ensued in Parliament, may have caused a considerable searching of maps and geographies for information concerning the island which has been so summarily "annexed." With regard to this particular island the sources of information are few, and not within the reach of everybody. So little, indeed, is known of it, that New Guinea has been called "The Dark Island," and we propose, in view of recent events and prospective agitation, to throw a little light on it for our readers.

New Guinea is about one thousand five hundred miles long, and four hundred miles broad, at its greatest extremes. In superficial area it covers about two hundred and fifty thousand square miles, and it is thus the largest island in the world, if we elect to consider the mainland of Australia a continent. Being placed immediately to the north of Australia, and separated only, at one point, by ninety miles of water from the colony of Queensland, it has, ever since the settlement of that colony, hovered on the horizon of our colonists as a land of mingled golden hope and darkened menace.

The Portuguese are credited with the discovery of the island so long ago as 1526, and they named it Papua, by which name it is still occasionally called, while its inhabitants are almost invariably spoken of as Papuans. The name, New Guinea, is due to a Spanish navigator of 1545, who fancied a resemblance in the coast-line to that of the Guinea coast of West Africa. Although during the next hundred years or so, several Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch mariners visited, or at least sighted the country, the first British expedition which makes mention of it is that of Dampier in 1699. Dampier circumnavigated the island, and had a pretty lively time of it with the natives. In the next century, various British, French, and Dutch vessels paid flying

visits, but the first attempt to collect trustworthy information with regard to it, was not made until about 1845. Afterwards, Captain Owen Stanley (whose name has been given to a range of mountains in the south-east peninsula) in Her Majesty's ship *Rattlesnake* made a survey of a portion of the coast. In 1828, however, the Dutch had attempted to form a settlement at Triton Bay, and they are yet supposed to have a prior claim to a considerable territory in the north-west.

The first attempt at colonisation by Britons was in 1864, when a company was formed for the purpose in Sydney. The practical results of that attempt, however, were small, and although there was a good deal of talk and much memorialising of Government by the people of New South Wales, there was nothing further actually done under their auspices until 1872. But in that year an expedition was despatched in the brig *Maria*, which was wrecked on the Barrier Reef, only a few of the party surviving, to be picked up by Captain Moresby in the *Basiliak*. The fates, indeed, seemed to be against the exploration of New Guinea. Until this time no one had penetrated to the interior, and but few had barely touched the shores. In 1873, Captain Moresby made two voyages, surveyed a large portion of the coast, and discovered and named Port Moresby, a natural harbour on the south-east coast, which has since been the point to which nearly all subsequent expeditions have been first of all directed.

In fact it is to Captain Moresby that we owe nearly all our geographical knowledge of New Guinea. He surveyed almost the whole of the coasts of the eastern portion of the island, rectified many errors of former maps, opened up an archipelago of fertile islands, and discovered a short sea-passage between Australia and China. Captain Moresby's book remains the standard work of reference regarding the geography of New Guinea, but at the same time it must be admitted that the missionaries of the London Missionary Society have also done good service in adding to our stock of knowledge. Messrs. M'Farlane and Lawes have made many trips along the coast in the missionary steamer *Ellangowan*, and have at various times sent accounts of their expeditions. As far as the European races are concerned, intercourse with New Guinea has been practically through the missionaries, and it is pleasant to be

able to record that the labours of these men have been as untiring as they have been noble, and are in marked contrast with the history of some others of their cloth in the South Seas.

They have founded mission-stations all along the south-eastern end of the island, have established schools, and instructed native teachers, with such results that all the trading and exploring expeditions which have followed their footsteps have found the way easier and the native people more tractable than in other quarters. We do not hear of anything like the marvellous conversion of the Fijians, whose rapid and universal adoption of Christianity suggests the uneasy feeling that it may be more superficial than real. Nevertheless, the missionaries in New Guinea have at least got in the thin end of the wedge by which Christianity and civilisation will be driven home. The names of M'Farlane and Lawes should always be remembered as the pioneers of civilisation in New Guinea.

The island has always had a strong attraction for naturalists; and Mr. Alfred R. Wallace some years ago made a visit to its shores, and has told much that is interesting about it in *The Malay Archipelago*, as also in an article in *The Contemporary Review* some four years ago. But Signor D'Albertis, an Italian naturalist, was even more enterprising, and has also been more copious in his communications. Between 1872 and 1878 he paid a succession of visits to the island, and on one of them he penetrated up the Fly River to a point about the very centre of the thickest part of the island. Although Dr. Beccari, Mr. Octavius Stone, Mr. Maklucho Macklay, and other naturalists have contributed to our knowledge of the fauna and flora, to Signor D'Albertis still belongs the distinction of having seen more of the island and of its inhabitants than any other European explorer.

In 1878 and 1879 a number of expeditions went out from New South Wales and Queensland, on the report that gold was to be found on the Goldie River. All, or nearly all, of these had disastrous ends, through fever, quarrels with the natives, and disgust at not finding the El-dorado they had expected. They have added little to our knowledge, and not much to our credit, while they have rendered the way more difficult for their successors on the same track.

And now, to sum up, what do we really know about New Guinea, its adaptability

for colonisation, and its capabilities for employing British capital and sustaining a European race of settlers? The present writer was one of the first to point out several years ago the attractions of the island, and its potential danger in the hands of others, and he has not ceased to collect all the information obtainable with regard to it. That information at the best is but meagre. We know almost nothing except of a narrow fringe of the shores, and many of the reports are very conflicting. A careful balancing of the evidence, however, leads to the conclusion that away from the coast-line, which is unhealthy, the country is suitable for a European settlement to a certain extent. It is not adapted to European labour, and success seems improbable without friendly co-operation with the aborigines. The men who have, so far, gone for purposes of gain have not been the right sort to promote such co-operation; and, moreover, they have made the mistake of approaching the native tribes in numerous and strongly-armed parties. In all cases of hostility on the part of the natives, the beginning seems to have been in the fears aroused by the numbers of the white invaders. As a rule, small parties have been unmolested. Mr. Wallace and Signor D'Albertis lived tranquilly among them, although it is true the latter had some collisions when he steamed up the Fly River; but his party then was larger and more formidable in appearance than on previous occasions. Moresby's testimony bears distinctly in the same direction, and the agents despatched by Sir Arthur Gordon, the High Commissioner of Polynesia, in 1878 and in 1880, experienced no trouble with the natives, even when traversing a section of the country inhabited by cannibals.

Who and what are the aborigines of New Guinea, and whether one race or several, is a much-discussed question, and each explorer seems to have his own views on the matter. That they are in general character different from, and in some respects superior to, the Malays, seems established; but whether the Papuans must be considered as a race by themselves has not yet been fully demonstrated, although that theory is supported by Mr. Wallace. It is to be noted, however, that the sensational accounts which have from time to time been copied from colonial papers of the bloodthirsty attacks made on British sailors and the like, have in all cases referred to the islands and coast-line

resorted to by the Malays for kidnapping purposes. The reception given by the Papuans of these localities to all strangers is, therefore, not surprising. In other localities, and especially where the ground has been broken by the missionaries, they have been found friendly and peaceable. Their physique is good, their habits moral; they treat their women with respect; they are expert fishermen and fair agriculturists. Of religion they seem to have next to none, and their ceremonials are few. We must only speak in general terms, however, for there are several types found in New Guinea, but the majority are what has come to be accepted as the true Papuan race—of small stature, with narrow heads, small chins, large eyes, thick lips, woolly hair frizzled out to a prodigious extent, and of a copper colour of skin. The island is not populous. Mr. Chalmers, one of the missionaries, estimates the population at about two hundred thousand, which may be an underestimate, but it certainly is nearer the mark than the ideas of a recent writer in *The Times*, who wildly talked of millions.

New Guinea is peculiarly rich in vegetation, and it possesses generally a very fertile soil. Its animals are limited to the marsupial tribe and the pig, but it has a great variety of beautiful birds, and among them the famous "bird of paradise," and countless varieties of parrots. There is much timber of a gigantic size, including the camphor-tree, the sago-palm, and the nutmeg. Rice, maize, yams, bananas, and cocoa-nuts are cultivated by the natives, and tobacco also in the hilly districts, while there are several varieties of the sugar-cane. A Mr. Hanran, who, we believe, formed one of an expedition sent from Queensland, thus writes: "From what I know myself, and from what I could learn from others, I think New Guinea will become a rich field for the planter. The virgin soil of the country, producing such rich vegetation spontaneously, and the beautiful sugar-cane and other tropical plants that are grown by the natives, are inducements that will attract the attention of men who will initiate and fertilise the growth of rice, sugar, and other tropical produce. The planter may have dry seasons to contend with, but when we consider that—unlike Northern Australia, where the river-beds are nearly dry the greater part of the year—the rivers are always running, and scarcely fordable at any time, and it is the damp sultry climate

and heavy atmosphere which cause so much ague and fever in the country, there is not much cause for apprehending that great evil. The greatest difficulty the planter will have to contend with will be in finding labour. The South Sea Islander, or the negro who works in the rice and sugar fields of Louisiana, may be suitable; the New Guinea native certainly would." The same writer is also strongly of opinion that the island is auriferous, and there is certainly still good ground for thinking so, although the gold-seekers of 1879 met with hardly any success.

The opinion we have just quoted with regard to the fertility of the island and the manner in which it can be utilised by Europeans coincides with that of D'Albertis and others best qualified to speak. All accounts agree that European settlements on the coast are not desirable, but that the climate on the uplands is salubrious enough, especially in the dry season; and even the coast may be rendered more habitable in time, by the removal of the rank masses of decaying vegetable matter, and the cultivation of the chinchona-tree. In the interior, curiously enough, D'Albertis found a higher grade of civilisation than amongst coast tribes, and better cultivation and appliances for labour and warfare.

We arrive, then, at the conclusion that New Guinea offers large and special attractions, and, that possessing such illimitable natural riches, it cannot much longer remain enshrouded in the mystery which has hitherto enveloped it. Such a mine of wealth must be tapped sooner or later by some one or other of the European nations. Shall it be by England? There are many reasons why it should be so. Occupied, to however small an extent, by an alien race, it would always remain a menace to our Australian children, whose position is precarious enough already in the event of the mother-country engaging in war with any great maritime power. Troops could be massed there, armaments prepared, and navies collected in its natural harbours, wherewith to sweep the rich cities of Australia; and, further, Britons have proved themselves the best colonisers, and, although it has many dark pages, the history of British intercourse with aboriginal races is brighter by far than that of any other European nation. If civilisation and Christianity are to be carried into New Guinea, the work will be better done, we are justified in thinking, by ourselves than by France, or even than by Germany.

To a certain extent the Queenslanders have taken the law into their own hands, but the step they have taken cannot be regarded as final. As yet the Home Government has not confirmed it, and may even disown it, and Queensland is neither rich enough nor strong enough to develop and hold the whole country without other help. The other Australian colonies desire the annexation, but they may not approve of Queensland appropriating the land, although Queensland has certainly the largest stake in the question of proprietorship. In fact, the annexation of such a large country as New Guinea is much too great and serious a matter to be disposed of off-hand. There is no central chieftain to make formal cession, as King Thakombau did with Fiji, and to take forcible possession is neither justifiable nor desirable. The establishment of stations, and the appointment of commissioners authorised by the Crown, seems, however, not only feasible, but imperative, and from such a beginning our rights may be gradually extended by peaceful and legitimate means, until not only the wealth of the country may be properly developed to our advantage, but also the security of our neighbouring colonies may be assured. Between initiating some such policy as this, and allowing the Australians to take their own way, the Home Government will soon have to decide. But New Guinea is not to be won, as many seem to think, by the mere hoisting of the Union Jack in the Queen's name on a tiny speck of its enormous coast-line.

TIME BARGAINS.

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

"WHY ought Mr. Cuthbert to consider himself a lucky fellow, Captain Marmaduke? And do you always think aloud when alone?"

The speaker was Lilian Ramsay. She had forgotten her Blue Book, and had come back in search of it.

Marmaduke had not heard her open the door. For a moment his self-possession deserted him, but only for a moment.

"I will answer your last question first, Miss Ramsay," he said. "When living among the Chincas, I used to keep up my knowledge of English by talking aloud when alone, and it would appear that I have not yet got rid of the habit."

"A reasonable explanation. Now for my first question."

"Mr. Cuthbert Naylor is about to marry

Miss Ramsay; consequently Mr. Cuthbert Naylor ought to consider himself a very lucky man."

Lilian flushed a little.

"A compliment after the English style, or the Chinca?" she asked, without looking at Marmaduke.

"The Chincas are a practical people, and attach no value to words without actions. Among them, you compliment a person by presenting him with a choice morsel of fat out of your own calabash, or by delicately insinuating a few slices of cocoa-nut between his teeth."

Lilian laughed.

"A style of compliment which I hope you will not try to make fashionable in England," she said,

At this moment Binks entered the room carrying a letter on a salver.

"A letter for you, miss, marked 'im-mejeate.'"

"Thank you, Binks. Captain Marmaduke, with your permission."

Marmaduke bowed, and crossed to the window. Binks left the room.

Lilian opened her letter, wondering who it could be from. But as she read it, unmistakable signs of surprise and dismay showed themselves on her face.

"Gracious Heaven! can this be true?" she involuntarily exclaimed.

Marmaduke turned.

"No bad news, I hope, Miss Ramsay?"

"Very bad news indeed, Captain Marmaduke. I must see my guardian at once. You will excuse me, I'm sure?"

Marmaduke bowed. All the colour had left her face. Another word and her tears would have come. Marmaduke opened the door, and she passed out with a gentle inclination of her head.

"What can her bad news be?" muttered the captain to himself. "Both her parents are dead—so Jellicop said. But whatever her trouble may be, Cuthbert Naylor will have the privilege of trying to comfort her. I've not seen him yet, but I feel beforehand that I shall dislike him."

At one end of the room was a bow-window with a broad, low, cushioned seat, partly shaded by curtains. Here Marmaduke seated himself. He wanted to think. He was evidently perturbed and ill at ease.

He had been there but a few minutes when the Naylor, father and son, entered the room; the former with an open letter in his hand.

"Was ever anything so unfortunate?" said the elder of the two.

"Better that it should have happened now than a month hence," responded the other.

"You are right there. But such a contingency is too frightful to contemplate."

"The news is too precise not to be true. I wonder whether she has heard it."

"They don't seem to know that I am here," exclaimed Marmaduke to himself.

He coughed, rose from his seat, and came forward.

"We are not alone," whispered Cuthbert to his father.

"Ah, Captain Marmaduke," said the latter briskly. "Thought I saw you at a distance in the grounds a few minutes ago. By-the-bye, have you seen anything of Miss Ramsay lately?"

"She was here not five minutes ago. A letter was brought her, and she went at once in search of Mr. Jellicop."

"Pardon the question, but do you happen to know whether the letter in question contained any bad news?"

"Miss Ramsay intimated as much."

"Then she knows; so much the better," said Naylor in an "aside" to his son. Then, turning to Marmaduke, he added: "Captain Marmaduke—my son. Cuthbert, the name of this gentleman is his introduction. So much for being famous."

"A second edition of his father, bound in calf. Yes; I do dislike him," muttered Marmaduke to himself. Then aloud: "I hope no very serious misfortune has befallen Miss Ramsay?"

"Nothing more serious could well have happened to her, and as the news will soon be no secret I may as well tell it you now. The fact is, that in consequence of the failure of a certain bank, Miss Ramsay has lost the whole of her fortune."

"Fifteen thousand pounds! Think of that," ejaculated Cuthbert.

"Instead of being an heiress, she will be a pauper," said the father, wagging his head solemnly.

"A terrible blow to all of us."

"She and my son were to have been married in a month's time."

"A terrible blow indeed," said Marmaduke.

At this moment Mrs. Wapshot entered the room in a great flutter.

"Vere, I sympathise with you," she cried. "Cuthbert, I condole with you from my heart." Then taking her son by both his hands, she kissed him. "At such a crisis I forget that I am a Wapshot, and remember only that once I was a Naylor."

"Very kind of you, Maria—very kind indeed," said Mr. Naylor, senior. Then he sat down to read his letter again.

Marmaduke strolled to the window.

"Then the news is known?" asked Cuthbert of his mother.

"Such news spreads like wildfire."

"Poor Lily! I wonder how she will bear it."

"She always impressed me as being rather a sensible young woman."

"With judicious training, she would have developed into all I could wish a wife to be. She would have been invaluable to me as an amanuensis—poor Lily!"

"You must not give way, Cuthbert."

"I won't," rejoined Mr. Naylor, junior, with some emphasis.

The Member for Fudgington had joined Marmaduke at the window.

"This marriage will have to be broken off at once," he said.

"Does such a rupture follow as a matter of course?" asked Marmaduke quietly.

"Undoubtedly. The contract being based purely on commercial principles, when one side fails to carry out its portion of the agreement, the entire arrangement becomes invalidated and falls to the ground. Miss Ramsay herself will be one of the first to take the same view of the affair."

"Supposing the case had been reversed, and that Mr. Cuthbert Naylor had lost his fortune; what would have happened then?"

Mr. Naylor coughed, drew himself up to his full height, and buried one hand in the breast of his frock-coat.

"My son, sir, is not rich," he remarked with dignity. "His brains are his sole worldly wealth. Before him looms a great future. For the sake of that future he cannot afford to marry a woman without fortune."

"I quite agree with you that, under the circumstances, it would be moral suicide for your son to marry Miss Ramsay."

He walked to the table, selected a rosebud from the vase which Lilian had filled, and fixed it in his button-hole.

Mr. Naylor looked after him.

"Hang me if I can make that fellow out!" he muttered to his son.

"Hush! Here comes Lilian," exclaimed Cuthbert.

They all turned. She stood there in the doorway, looking very pale but very composed, and never more beautiful than in this hour of her trouble.

For a moment or two she stood, holding the handle of the door, and looking from

one face to the other. Then she came slowly forward.

"I have come in search of you, sir," she said to Mr. Naylor. "And of you," to Cuthbert.

The latter took her hand and pressed it to his lips. She smiled a sad little smile, and drew her fingers gently from his grasp.

"Control yourself," whispered Mrs. Wapshot to her son.

"You have heard of my loss?" asked Lilian with a little quaver in her voice which she could not control.

Mr. Naylor and his son bowed a grave assent.

"Then is my task so much the easier," she resumed. "Cuthbert, between you and me all is now over for ever."

To this Cuthbert apparently had no answer to make. He sat down, began to bite his nails, and fixed his eyes steadfastly on the carpet.

"I am glad this blow has fallen now instead of later on," continued Lilian, "and that your prospects in life will not suffer through me."

"Noble young woman! I knew exactly what she would say," whispered the M.P. to Marmaduke.

"Noble young man!" whispered Marmaduke in return.

"Eh?"

"To give up such a prize for the sake of his future."

"Humph!" and Mr. Naylor turned his back on his new acquaintance.

"Mine has been a pleasant dream, Cuthbert," went on Lilian. "I dare say that in time I should have learnt to enjoy Blue Books as well as, or perhaps better than, any other kind of reading. At least I would have tried to do so. Here is the ring you slipped on my finger one summer evening. 'Wear this for my sake till I exchange it for another,' you said. But we did not know then what would happen—did we?" She held out the ring as she spoke, but Cuthbert stirred not, nor even lifted his eyes from the ground.

"Quite overcome, poor boy! Give me the ring," said Mrs. Wapshot.

Lilian looked at her for a moment, then dropped the ring mechanically into her outstretched palm.

"You are a good girl—very," said Mrs. Wapshot emphatically as she vainly tried to force the ring on to one of her own bony fingers.

"You have behaved admirably," this from Mr. Naylor.

"Admirably," echoed Mrs. W.

Marmaduke turned away, sick at heart.

"I think I have nothing more to say," remarked Lilian a little wearily.

"One moment, my dear. If Maria Naylor Wapshot can assist you in any way—say, as nursery-governess, or as companion to a lady of position—you may rely——"

"Aye, aye! what's that? Nursery-governess! companion to a lady!"

Everyone started. There at the open French-window stood the burly form of Mr. Jellicop.

A passionate sob burst from Lilian's overcharged heart.

"Oh, Uncle Frank," she cried, and next moment she was in the shelter of his arms.

Mr. Jellicop glared round as if he would like to hit out at somebody or something.

"Nursery-governess!" he repeated in a tone of withering contempt. "Not for my Lily—not while Frank Jellicop has a roof over his head or a stiver in his purse!"

NORZ.—The following extract from a clever and interesting work, published by Longmans in 1876, entitled *German Home Life*, would seem to prove that Mr. Vere Naylor's New Marriage Act was not so very far in advance of a state of things actually in existence among our Teutonic cousins at the present time:

"Marriage may be said to be a mere legalised temporary engagement where every facility is given to divorce. Mutual dislike, family quarrels, almost any trivial pretext, is admitted by the Prussian law as sufficient cause for the dissolution of matrimony. For instance, par. fifty-seven of the Ehepatent, which is still in use in Prussia, says: 'Thirdly, we permit a severance of the conjugal tie when between the wedded parties a rooted enmity doth exist, or if an insuperable dislike shall have arisen, and both parties demand divorce.' The pastor of the parish, as a mere formality, admonishes such couples that they must agree; the ecclesiastical court does the same; the one or the other, or both, remain obdurate; and in due course the marriage is dissolved. In the case of one or the other party opposing the divorce out of malice prepense, the court reserves to itself the right to grant the application, in spite of the opposing party, provided it find the petition just."

"To persons who have lived long in Germany the examples of spouses who have dissolved their union, and, after years of estrangement, have been remarried, cannot be altogether unfamiliar."

CHAPTER IV.

THE lawn at Brookfield was a charming lounge in fine weather. Scattered about on it were several fine old trees, in whose ample shade nestled rustic seats and chairs of various shapes and sizes in which one might read or talk or gently drowse through the hot summer afternoons. Here and there a clump of shining-leaved evergreens or an ivied basket of many-coloured flowers lent variety to the scene.

It was the fourth morning after the receipt by Lilian Ramsay of the letter which told her of the loss of her fortune. On a rustic

seat in the shade of a large elm sat Stephen Elliott, one of the most rising painters of the day. He was cutting the pages of a review in an absent-minded way, his thoughts evidently being elsewhere. He was a clever-looking man of thirty, with fairly good features, and with a certain undefinable air of distinction.

He had not been sitting more than ten minutes in the cool shade of the elm when he was joined by Cecil Dane.

"Morning, Elliott," said the latter.

"Morning, Dane," responded the artist.

They had each married a niece of Mr. Jellicop; consequently, their wives were cousins.

"So your papers which ought to have been here three days ago have not arrived yet?" said Elliott, as Dane sat down on the opposite chair.

"No. It's an awful nuisance hanging about here in this way."

"They may come this afternoon."

"Let us hope they will. When do you expect yours?"

"At the end of this week or the beginning of next. If you remember, there was only a few days' difference between your wedding and mine."

From the pocket of his morning-coat Dane produced a tobacco-pouch and a tiny packet of papers, and set to work to manufacture a cigarette.

"And so both our little tragi-comedies are about to end after the same ignoble fashion," he said presently.

"Pitiful, isn't it? When Agnes and I were first married we ridiculed and utterly scouted the idea of parting at the end of three years."

"Just as Linda and I did."

"We vowed to each other that our love should last through life, undimmed and unchanged."

"My own case exactly."

"And to think that all this happened only three short years ago!"

"It seems like a dozen to me."

"I thought my wife an angel, and she believed me to be perfection."

"As long as the honeymoon lasted."

"By the time that was over we both found out how mistaken we had been. After all, I'm not sure that a fellow ought to expect to marry an angel."

Cecil Dane shook his head and looked preternaturally grave.

"Supposing Vere Naylor's Act had never been passed?" he suggested interrogatively a minute or two later.

"In that case we should have been tied up for life."

"The male mind shrinks appalled before such a prospect."

"What do you intend doing with yourself as soon as this business is over?"

"I have some thoughts of a scamper on the Continent for a couple of months," answered Dane, as he proceeded to light his cigarette.

"Not a bad idea. Why shouldn't we join company?"

"With all my heart. As companions in misery——"

"Arcades ambo——"

"We shall be able to mingle our tears——"

"And console each other en route."

"It's agreed then," said Dane. "I will stay till your papers come down, and then we can start together. By-the-bye, there's a youngster in your case, is there not?"

Elliott winced.

"Pardon me, old fellow, if I've touched a sore point," said Cecil, with genuine concern in his voice. "Believe me, I had no intention of doing so."

"It's nothing," said the other. Then after a moment's pause he added: "Yes, as you say, there is a youngster—a boy fifteen months old. He is too young to be separated from his mother. I shall see him, of course, at certain times. Other arrangements can be made when he is older."

Next moment the two men looked at each other. They had heard the sound of feminine voices which seemed to be coming their way. The speakers drew nearer, till at length they were only separated from the men by a thick hedge of evergreens.

"I assure you, my dear, that I have not exaggerated the affair in the least." The speaker was Mrs. Wapshot.

"I would never have believed it of her—never!"

"My wife's voice," whispered Dane to Elliott, letting the glass drop from his eye.

"Such a saint as everybody thought her!"

"My wife's voice," whispered Elliott to Dane.

"Better beat a retreat—eh?" queried Cecil.

"By all means. Mrs. Wapshot carries too many guns for me."

Both the men rose to their feet. Dane flung away his cigarette.

"If all women were like her," he said, "what a remarkable place this planet would be."

"Gently does it."

"We shall get away without being seen."

They stole off on tip-toe round one corner of the hedge of evergreens as their wives, accompanied by Mrs. Wapshot, appeared round the opposite corner. The sharp eyes of the elder lady were the first to catch sight of the runagates.

"Ah, ah! there go our two black sheep."

"Cecil!"

"Stephen!"

"They think they have got away without being seen. Clever creatures!"

"What can they have been talking about?" asked Mrs. Dane.

"About us, perhaps," suggested Mrs. Elliott.

"More probably about themselves," said Mrs. Wapshot with a sneer. "Condoling with each other like the poor blighted beings they are. Let us seize on their vacant thrones; we have far more right to them than they."

Mrs. Wapshot plumped herself down on the rustic seat that ran round the bole of the old elm, while the two young wives, who were soon to be wives no longer, drew up a chair, one on each side of her.

Linda Dane and Agnes Elliott were both pretty women. Agnes was a brunette, tall, lithe, and graceful; with wonderful black eyes, black wavy hair almost as fine as silk, and pure olive complexion. Her profile was perfect—at least her husband used to say so; and being a painter, and a clever one to boot, no doubt he ought to know. There was a slightly querulous and dissatisfied expression about her mouth at times; she gave one the impression of being what she was—a woman who had been spoiled and allowed to have her own way as long as she could remember. Such people have generally a fine faculty for making themselves and those nearest and dearest to them miserable, even when a kind fate has given them everything to make them otherwise. In any case she was very graceful and very winning, with soft, quiet, sunny ways, as though life were one long sweet afternoon to be passed in some enchanted garden where the demon of care could never gain admission. She was mistress to perfection of the art of doing nothing charmingly and without conscious effort.

Between Agnes and her cousin, Linda Dane, there was a marked contrast. Linda had blue-grey eyes and yellow hair, and a face from which smiles were never long absent. She was a rosy, healthy,

fair, blooming young Englishwoman; a product such as no other country seems able to bring to an equally refined degree of perfection. Not without a temper of her own, hasty and undisciplined it may be, but readily brought back to the point of reconciliation. She, too, had been spoiled when younger, but her spoiling had originated in neglect, and not in over-indulgence.

Linda was the first to speak when they had taken their seats under the elm.

"Cecil was smoking, of course," she said. "He nearly always is smoking nowadays. Papa detested the filthy habit, and so do I. Before I would agree to marry, I made Cecil promise that he would give it up; but the honeymoon was scarcely over before I detected him surreptitiously smoking a cigarette in the garden. He said he was doing it to kill the insects on the rose-trees, and I forgave him."

"You will never find the wretches without an excuse," interposed Mrs. Wapshot.

"By-and-by," resumed Linda, "he began to come home with his clothes smelling of tobacco, and little by little it got from bad to worse, till one day I found him smoking an immense meerschaum. The horrid thing was nearly black. I almost fainted. 'You are determined to break my heart, I know you are,' I said to him. What do you think his excuse was? A medical certificate stating that Cecil had symptoms of heart-disease, and that nicotine administered by inhalation, three or four times a day, was the only remedy!"

Mrs. Wapshot held up her hands in silent protest against such depravity.

"I should never interfere with my husband for smoking," said Agnes in her low musical tones. "I consider it rather manly to smoke. My grievances, I am thankful to say, are of a far deeper dye. If I had twenty daughters, I would say to each of them, 'Never marry an A.R.A.' No one knows what an artist's wife has to put up with. When I came into my fortune a year ago, I quite thought that Stephen would have shut up his studio for ever. We might have bought an estate in the country. Stephen might have kept his hunters."

"And have shot over his own turnips," put in Mrs. Wapshot.

"I might have had my own garden-parties."

"And have given away tracts and flannel to the poor."

"We might have mixed with the county

families, and have become thoroughly respectable."

"And such a prospect did not tempt him?"

"Quite the contrary. He says that his art is like the breath of life to him, and that not for twenty fortunes would he give up his brush and palette!"

"Misguided infatuation!"

"If Stephen will persist in being a painter, why doesn't he paint landscapes, with cows, and sheep, and clouds, or else cottage interiors, with a child and a cradle and an old woman threading a needle, as other married artists do? Instead of which, he will persist in painting from models."

"Models!"

"Of course. Coming and going continually."

"Females most of them, no doubt?"

"And young."

"You are to be pitied."

Linda began to feel that she had been silent quite long enough.

"If my husband were an artist I should not condescend to be jealous of such creatures," she said. "But where there is real cause for jealousy, that is different. I have reason to believe that Cecil sometimes goes behind the scenes of the Lorgnette Theatre."

"A place, I have been told, where they have ballets all the year round. No wonder you insisted on a separation."

"I must say, Linda," interposed Agnes, "that I think you are wonderfully thin-skinned in such matters. Your husband has not treated you half as badly as mine has treated me."

Linda's eyes struck fire in a moment.

"How dare you say such a thing, Agnes?" she cried with a little stamp of her foot.

"My dears, my dears!" soothingly from Mrs. Wapshot.

"How would you like a husband," continued Linda, "who objects to my getting up at seven-thirty to attend matins at St. Crumplins, but who often stays out himself till three in the morning at his club?"

"What would the men say, I wonder, if we had clubs at which we stayed till three in the morning?" asked Mrs. Wapshot; "and yet we have just as much right to do so as they have."

It was now Agnes's turn.

"How would you like a husband who, when I wanted a maid, actually asked me to engage a sister of the—the creature who had sat to him several times for her shoulders, saying she was a most respect-

able girl, and had a blind mother whom she helped to keep?"

But Linda's list of grievances was not yet at an end.

"How would you like a husband who cares more for a racecourse than a classical concert, and who has no soul to appreciate the music of the future? How would you like a husband who doesn't know Faience ware from Palissy, or Rose-du-Barri from Old Chelsea? Above all, how would you like a husband who, when I invite dear mamma to pass a few days with me, actually goes and stays with some of his bachelor friends, saying there's no room in the house for two masters at one time?"

"My dear, you really horrify me!" ejaculated Mrs. Wapshot.

"Cecil and I used to have such delightful little tiffs," pouted Linda; "now he never tiffs with me. No matter how aggravating I try to be, he only laughs, and makes nasty little sarcastic remarks. It's most unkind of him."

"It's a plain proof how little he cares for you," remarked Mrs. Wapshot as she rose. "And now, my dears, I must go indoors."

"I will go with you," said Agnes. "Somehow, of late, I have felt as if I could not bear to be alone. Are you not coming, Linda?"

"Not yet. The air of the house seems to stifle me."

"You are quite sure, dear Mrs. Wapshot," said Agnes with a touch of anxiety in her voice, "that we are fully justified, Linda and I, in acting as we have?"

"It is not yet too late," said Linda. "The papers have not arrived. We could telegraph, and——"

She looked at Mrs. Wapshot with a sort of pitiful eagerness.

"My dear girls, you surprise me," said that lady, gazing through her spectacles from one to the other. "If you are not amply justified in leaving your husbands, I should like to know who is. Why was the new Act passed, if not to meet cases such as yours? In a few hours, or, at the most, in a few days, you will be relieved of your encumbrances—I might say, of your tyrants—and having regained your freedom, and profiting by the experience of the past, you will know how to command a happy future, and will live to bless the name of Vere Naylor."

She moved slowly towards the house when she had done speaking, and Agnes followed her in silence.

UNPREMEDITATED CRITICISMS.

UNPREMEDITATED criticisms—that is, such as are provoked by the collision of wits or elicited in friendly converse and correspondence—have, at least, the merit of being genuine expressions of opinion, untrammelled by the exigencies of literary composition, the necessity of studying editorial requirements, the fear of offending friends, or of incurring retaliation at the hands of the criticised.

Richardson, for instance, would hardly have cared to engage in public controversy with Sterne; but, corresponding with a feminine admirer, he did not hesitate to brand the humorist's books as execrable productions, and endorsing the verdict of a young lady who pronounced *Tristram Shandy* to be "a little book and little in its merits," which in another season would be as much decried as it was then extolled. In the same safe seclusion did the author of *Pamela* divulge his inability to get through Fielding's *Amelia*, and avow it was beyond his conception that a man of family, who had some learning, and was really a writer, could descend so excessively low in all his pieces.

Writing to a friend, Leigh Hunt objected to being associated with Cobbett, on the ground that, although Cobbett suffered, he did not know how to suffer; and though he fought, he assuredly knew how to run away, and it was doubtful if he was ever in earnest in anything save finding fault and selling his journal. When Byron waged fierce war against the poetic brotherhood of the Lakes, Wordsworth had no more ardent defender than the author of *Rimini*; but in his later years Hunt confessed to "J. F." that he was strongly inclined to do all in his power to depose the god he had helped to set up, finding, on renewed acquaintance, that he was not half the man he had taken him for, and deficient in all the musical side of a poet's nature. "He seems to like nothing heartily, except the talking about it, and is in danger of being taken by posterity—who will certainly not read two-thirds of him—for a kind of Puritan retainer of the Establishment, melancholy in his recommendation of mirth, and perplexed between prudence and pragmatism, subserviency and ascendancy, retrospection and innovation." This would have mightily astonished Wordsworth, as it would, perhaps, have astonished Southey to know that Wordsworth declared he would not give five

shillings for all the poetry he had ever written.

Disraeli's Lord Cadurcis would have been a fitting president for the New Shakespeare Society, asking, as he does, "Who is Shakespeare? We know of him as much as we do of Homer. Did he write half the plays attributed to him? Did he ever write a single whole play? I doubt it. He appears to me to have been an inspired adaptor for the theatres, which were not as good as barns. I take him to have been a botcher-up of old plays. His popularity is of modern date, and it may not last; it would have surprised him marvellously."

Not more marvellously, may be, than to have his Hamlet's assertion,

'Tis not madness
That I have uttered; bring me to the test
And I the matter will re-word, which madness
Would gambol from,

cited before the College of Physicians by Sir Henry Hallford, with the comment that he had found the test an infallible one, and its application in one case had prevented the execution of a will which would have deprived the insane man's heir-at-law of a good estate. Of the botcher-up of old plays King Louis Philippe declared that his kings were as true to life as his lovers. "When the king and queen in *Hamlet*," said he, "are dismissing their attendants from further waiting, his Majesty says, 'Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern;' on which the queen adds: 'Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz.' Now, one almost should have been a queen to know that it was needful to balance the seeming preference of the royal epithet by inverting the phrase."

A finer compliment was paid the Warwickshire wizard by Jim Bridger, the famous scout, who died a year or so ago. He once tried city life, but soon bade good-bye to New York and returned to his old station in Utah; none the sadder for his experience, but somewhat wiser, inasmuch as he had learned that a man named Shakespeare had lived and written *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with which the old backwoodsman's fancy had been deeply impressed. One day a traveller came to Fort Bridger, and, after looking over Jim's stock, set his heart on a yoke of oxen, with which he did not desire to part, and the customer went his way unsatisfied. Next morning a messenger came to Fort Bridger from him, to say he must have that yoke.

"He's just waiting for 'em," said the

man; "a sitting there, reading a book called Shakespeare."

Jim was on his feet in a moment, and off to the corral.

"Stranger," said he, "give me that book and take them oxen."

"You're welcome to the book," was the answer, "but I'll pay for the oxen."

Jim was obdurate, however, and had his way. As soon as he got home with his treasure, Jim hired a reader, and every evening followed the fortunes of Shakespeare's heroes and heroines. One evening, the reader had just made an end of the crook-backed king's appeal to Tyrrel to remove his sweet sleep's disturbers, when his auditor, springing from his seat, shouted:

"Hold on there! Jest wait till I get my rifle, and I'll shoot that darned scoundrel!"

Rachel is credited with amending Legouv  's Medea. The dramatist, calling at the actress's villa at Auteuil, found her amusing herself among the flowers, and proposed a rehearsal of the grand scene in the play, in which he made Medea exult over the poisoning of her rival. Rachel went through the scene, and then told Legouv   he must cut it out, or it would prove fatal to the piece as it destroyed its interest. The author insisted that it carried the interest to the highest pitch.

"Yes, the interest in the horrible and odious," said Rachel. "But you forget that I have to kill my children later on, and that I must be pathetic. Now, how could I be so, if a few minutes before the audience had seen me coldly, perfidiously, and in the most cowardly manner commit a murder? If you put in your great scene of the murder of Creusa, you should leave out the murder of the children. I should be nothing but a criminal. I should not believe in my own tears!"

For a few moments Legouv   was silent, then, grasping Rachel's hand, he said:

"You are right, I will cut out the scene."

Dramatists, however, would not always do well by taking counsel with the players. After witnessing the first performance of East Lynne, at Washington, Edwin Forrest sent for McCullough, who had played Archibald Carlyle, to tell him he ought to be ashamed of figuring in such a demoralising exhibition. He owned that the play was a good one, and declared it might be rendered irreproachable by an alteration of one of the last speeches in it. McCullough thereupon asked the tragedian to alter the speech to his liking, and undertook to deliver it in the new shape.

Forrest accordingly re-wrote Carlyle's reply to the appeal of his erring wife, and was at the theatre next evening to see the result. The play went capitally—handkerchiefs were in active requisition. At last the scene in which the betrayed husband confronts his dying wife was reached.

"Oh, Archibald," said Lady Isabel, "I am on the verge of eternity. Before I cross it will you not speak one loving word to me? Will you not say that you forgive my sin, and when I am dead will forget it?"

Instead of Archibald Carlyle responding with words of pity and forgiveness, he answered:

"No, Isabel, I can neither forgive nor forget. Forgiveness is the prerogative of that God whose holiest commands you have outraged. Nor can I forget the wounds whose scars yet deface my life. I gave no cause for this cruel wrong; but grant that you fancied such a cause to exist, yet you concealed your doubts, and concealment is the grave of love. In that grave you buried not only your own peace, your children's highest pride, your husband's honour, but all human right to interfere between your sin and the moral consequences. Pray Heaven to forgive, but ask me not to forgive. Farewell!"

The curtain fell without a hand, and the manager was so roundly abused for permitting such a violation of the instincts of humanity, that he thought it best to remove East Lynne from his bills forthwith.

Seeing a volume of romances in the hand of a coachman he had engaged, a Parisian novelist asked him if he were fond of novel-reading. The man owned he was, but expressed his disgust at the ignorance displayed by authors.

"In one story," said he, "I read of a prince hailing a carriage, flinging himself into it, casting his purse to the driver, and crying: 'Drive me to the Faubourg St. Honor  .' In another, 'She resolved to solve the mystery, sprang into the first vehicle that presented itself, and, flinging her pocket-book to the coachman, said: "Follow that carriage!"' Now, in forty years, I have driven thousands of people—all sorts of people, under all conditions, and never has a fare thrown me purse or pocket-book. They have just given me thirty-five sous, or, very rarely, a couple of francs."

At the time of the Crimean War the Queen's eldest daughter exhibited a water-colour drawing representing a grenadier lying dead on the battle-field, his body occupying the centre of the picture. While

the fair artist was putting the finishing touches to her work, the Heir-Apparent came into her studio, and, after examining the picture, exclaimed: "The perspective is all wrong!"

"How is it wrong?" asked the princess.

Taking up a pair of compasses the fault-finder measured the distances from the top and the two bottom corners of the drawing to the middle of the guardsman's body, and finding they were all equal, quietly enquired, "Can that be true to Nature?" walking out of the room without giving his victim an opportunity of expressing her views of criticism by compass. The most privileged visitor to Theodore Gudin's studio would scarcely have presumed to question the truth of his perspective; but when the marine painter ventured to put his favourite animals on canvas, he, to use an expressive Americanism, gave himself away, and impelled a friend to utter the warning: "Take care, Gudin, or the Society for the Protection of Animals will prosecute you for defacing the models of nature." Gudin's horses and dogs were equally horrible, whichever way you looked at them, unlike the sunset of an Italian painter, which a connoisseur averred would make a tolerable sunrise if it was turned downside up.

At a Palais Royal reception, Maxime du Camp, Vernet, Jadin, and Delacroix were talking on art, when the last-named observed that, spite of his faults, Ingres possessed many of the qualities necessary to make a painter.

"Why, he is the greatest painter of the age!" exclaimed Vernet.

Pressed to explain what he found so admirable in Ingres, Vernet owned that he drew like a chimney-sweep, could not make his figures look natural, that his pictures resembled brown bread, and that he had no imagination.

"Well then," queried Delacroix, "if he excels neither in drawing, colouring, composition, or imagination, how can he be the greatest painter of the age?"

"I don't know," answered Horace; "but he is our only painter for all that."

By-and-by he remarked to Du Camp that he almost pitied Delacroix, who could not paint anything resembling a human being, and yet denied Ingres's talent. Parting company with Vernet, his amused listener rejoined Delacroix and Jadin, just in time to hear the former say, "Poor Vernet thinks he can paint!" To this Jadin answered nothing, his eyes searching

the shifting crowd, till questioned by Delacroix he replied: "I am looking for M. Ingres; I want to ask him what he thinks of you."

Julius Beer must have been somewhat puzzled to understand exactly what Rossini thought of him, when after applauding his funeral march in honour of Meyerbeer, the famous composer said, "Very good; very good, indeed; but it would have been better if it were you that were dead, and the funeral march had been your uncle's." There was no doubt about Berlioz's sincerity when, hearing his *Reverie et Caprice* played by a great violinist, he declared that no artist had ever so completely caught his meaning, and so wonderfully interpreted it; but his rapture would have been considerably diminished had he overheard the violinist remark to Mendelssohn, "I am glad I have got through it; I never had such a task in my life. I have not the remotest idea what I have been playing, or what the piece can be about!"

MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER LXIII. THE LAST OF AUGUSTUS SCARBOROUGH.

WHEN old Mr. Scarborough was dead, and had been for a while buried, Augustus made his application in form to Messrs. Grey and Barry. He had made it through his own attorney, and had now received Mr. Barry's answer, through the same attorney. The nature of the application had been in this wise: That Mr. Augustus Scarborough had been put into the position of the eldest son; that he did not himself in the least doubt that such was his true position; that close enquiry had been made at the time, and that all the lawyers, including Mr. Grey and Mr. Barry, had assented to the statements as then made by old Mr. Scarborough; that he himself had then gone to work to pay his brother's debts, for the honour of the family, and had then paid them, partly out of his own immediate pocket, and partly out of the estate, which was the same as his own property; that during his brother's "abeyance" he had assisted in his maintenance, and, on his brother's return, had taken him to his own home; that then his father had died, and that this incredible new story had been told. Mr. Augustus Scarborough was in no way desirous of animadverting on his father's memory, but

was forced to repeat his belief that he was his father's eldest son ; and was, in fact, at that moment the legitimate owner of Tretton, in accordance with the existing entail. He did not wish to dispute his father's will, though his father's mental and bodily condition, at the time of the making of the will, might, perhaps, enable him to do so with success. The will might be allowed to pass as valid, but the rights of primogeniture must be held sacred.

Nevertheless, having his mother's memory in great honour, he felt himself ill-inclined to drag the family history before the public. For his mother's sake he was open to a compromise. He would advise that the whole property,—that which would pass under the entail, and that which was intended to be left by will,—should be valued, and that the total should then be divided between them. If his brother chose to take the family mansion, it should be so. Augustus Scarborough had no desire to set himself over his brother. But if this offer were not accepted, he must at once go to law, and prove that the Nice marriage had been, in fact, the one marriage by which his father and mother had been joined together. There was another proviso added to this offer ;—as the valuation and division of the property must take time, an income at the rate of two hundred pounds a month should be allowed to Augustus till such time as it should be completed. Such was the offer which Augustus had authorised his attorney to make.

There was some delay in getting Mountjoy to consent to a reply. Before the offer had reached Mr. Barry, he was already at Monte Carlo, with that ready money his father had left behind him. At every venture that he made—at least at every loss which he incurred—he told himself that it was altogether the doing of Florence Mountjoy. But he returned to England, and consented to a reply. He was the eldest son, and meant to support that position, both on his mother's behalf and on his own. As to his father's will, made in his favour, he felt sure that his brother would not have the hardihood to dispute it. A man's bodily sufferings were no impediment to his making a will ; of mental incapacity he had never heard his father accused till the accusation had now been made by his own son. He was, however, well aware that it would not be preferred. As to what his brother had done for himself, it was hardly worth his while to answer such an allegation. His memory

carried him but little further back than the day on which his brother turned him out of his rooms.

There were, however, many reasons,—and this was put in at the suggestion of Mr. Barry,—why he would not wish that his brother should be left penniless. If his brother would be willing to withdraw altogether from any lawsuit, and would lend his co-operation to a speedy arrangement of the family matters, a thousand a year, or twenty-five thousand pounds, should be made over to him, as a younger brother's portion. To this offer it would be necessary that a speedy reply should be given, and, under such circumstances, no temporary income need be supplied.

It was early in June when Augustus was sitting in his luxurious lodgings in Victoria Street, contemplating this reply. His own lawyer had advised him to accept the offer, but he had declared to himself a dozen times since his father's death, that in this matter of the property he would either make a spoon or spoil a horn. And the lawyer was no friend of his own,—was a man who knew nothing of the facts of the case beyond what were told him, and nothing of the working of his client's mind. Augustus had looked to him only for the law in the matter, and the lawyer had declared the law to be against his client. "All that your father said about the Nice marriage will go for nothing. It will be shown that he had an object."

"But there certainly was such a marriage."

"No doubt there was some ceremony,—performed with an object. A second marriage cannot invalidate the first, though it may itself be altogether invalidated. The Rummelsburg marriage is, and will be, an established fact, and of the Rummelsburg marriage your brother was no doubt the issue. Accept the offer of an income. Of course we can come to terms as to the amount ; and from your brother's character it is probable enough that he may increase it." Such had been his lawyer's advice, and Augustus was sitting there in his lodgings thinking of it.

He was not a happy man as he sat there. In the first place he owed a little money, and the debt had come upon him chiefly from his lavish expenditure in maintaining Mountjoy and Mountjoy's servant upon their travels. At that time he had thought that by lavish expenditure he might make Tretton certainly his own. He had not known his brother's character, and

had thought that by such means he could keep him down—with his head well under water. His brother might drink,—take to drinking regularly at Monte Carlo or some such place,—and might so die. Or he would surely gamble himself into further and utter ruin. At any rate he would be well out of the way, and Augustus in his pride had been glad to feel that he had his brother well under his thumb. Then the debts had been paid,—with the object of saving the estate from litigation on the part of the creditors. That had been his one great mistake. And he had not known his father,—or his father's guile, or his father's strength. Why had not his father died at once? as all the world assured him would be the case. Looking back, he could remember that the idea of paying the creditors had at first come from his father,—simply as a vague idea! Oh, what a crafty rascal his father had been! And then he had allowed himself, in his pride, to insult his father, and had spoken of his father's coming death as a thing that was desirable! From that moment his father had plotted his ruin. He could see it all now.

He was still minded to make the spoon; but he found,—he found that he should spoil the horn. Had there been anyone to assist him, he would still have persevered. He thought that he could have persevered with a lawyer who would really have taken up his case with interest. If Mountjoy could be made to drink,—so as to die! He was still next in the entail; and he was his brother's heir should his brother die without a will. But so he would be if he took the twenty-five thousand pounds. But to accept so poor a modicum would go frightfully against the grain with him. He seemed to think that by taking the allowance he would bring back his brother to all the long-lived decencies of life. He would have to surrender altogether that feeling of conscious superiority which had been so much to him. "Hang the fellow!" he exclaimed to himself. "I should not wonder if he were in that fellow's pay." The first "fellow" here was the lawyer, and the second was his brother.

When he had sat there alone for half an hour he could not make up his mind. When all his debts were paid he would not have much above half the twenty-five thousand pounds. His father had absolutely extracted five thousand pounds from him towards paying his brother's debts! The money had been wanted immediately. Together with the sum coming from the

new purchasers, father and son must each subscribe five thousand pounds to pay those Jews. So it had been represented to him, and he had borrowed the money to carry out his object. Had ever anyone been so swindled, so cruelly treated? This might probably be explained, and the five thousand pounds might be added to the twenty-five thousand pounds. But the explanation would be necessary, and all his pride would rebel against it. On that night when by chance he had come across his brother, bleeding and still half drunk, as he was about to enter his lodging, how completely under his thumb he had been! And now he was offering him of his bounty this wretched pittance! Then with half-muttered curses he execrated the names of his father, his brother, of Grey, and of Barry, and of his own lawyer.

At that moment the door opened, and his bosom friend, Septimus Jones, entered the room. At any rate this friend was the nearest he had to his bosom. He was a man without friends in the true sense. There was no one who knew the innermost wishes of his heart, the secret desires of his soul. There are so many who can divulge to none those secret wishes! And how can such an one have a friend who can advise him as to what he shall do? Scarcely can the honest man have such a friend, because it is so difficult for him to find a man who will believe in him! Augustus had no desire for such a friend, but he did desire someone who would do his bidding as though he were such a friend. He wanted a friend who would listen to his words, and act as though they were the truth. Mr. Septimus Jones was the man he had chosen, but he did not in the least believe in Mr. Septimus Jones himself. "What does that man say?" asked Septimus Jones. The man was the lawyer, of whom Augustus was now thinking, at this very moment, all manner of evil.

"D—— him!" said Augustus.

"With all my heart. But what does he say? As you are to pay him for what he says, it is worth while listening to it."

There was a tone in the voice of Septimus Jones which declared at once some diminution of his usual respect. So it sounded, at least, to Augustus. He was no longer the assured heir of Tretton, and in this way he was to be told of the failure of his golden hopes. It would be odd, he thought, if he could not still hold his dominion over Septimus Jones. "I am

not at all sure that I shall listen to him or to you either."

"As for that you can do as you like."

"Of course I can do as I like." Then he remembered that he must still use the man as a messenger, if in no other capacity. "Of course he wants to compromise it. A lawyer always proposes a compromise. He cannot be beat that way, and it is safe for him."

"You had agreed to that."

"But what are the terms to be? That is the question. I made my offer: half and half. Nothing fairer can be imagined, —unless, indeed, I choose to stand out for the whole property."

"But what does your brother say?"

He could not use his friend even as a messenger without telling him something of the truth. "When I think of it, of this injustice, I can hardly hold myself. He proposes to give me twenty-five thousand pounds."

"Twenty-five thousand pounds! For everything?"

"Everything; yes. What the devil do you suppose I mean? Now just listen to me." Then he told his tale as he thought that it ought to be told. He recapitulated all the money he had spent on his brother's behalf, and all that he chose to say that he had spent. He painted in glowing colours the position in which he would have been put by the Nice marriage. He was both angry and pathetic about the creditors. And he tore his hair almost with vexation at the treatment to which he was subjected.

"I think I'd take the twenty-five thousand pounds," said Jones.

"Never. I'd rather starve first."

"That's about what you'll have to do if all that you tell me is true." There was again that tone of disappearing subjection. "I'll be shot if I wouldn't take the money." Then there was a pause. "Couldn't you do that and go to law with him afterwards? That was what your father would have done." Yes. But Augustus had to acknowledge that he was not as clever as his father.

At last he gave Jones a commission. Jones was to see his brother and explain to him that before any question could be raised as to the amount to be paid under

the compromise, a sum of ten thousand pounds must be handed to Augustus to reimburse him for money out of pocket. Then Jones was to say, as out of his own head, that he thought that Augustus might probably accept fifty thousand pounds, in lieu of twenty-five thousand pounds. That would still leave the bulk of the property to Mountjoy, although Mountjoy must be aware of the great difficulties which would be thrown in his way by his father's conduct. But Jones had to come back the next day with an intimation that Mountjoy had again gone abroad, leaving full authority with Mr. Barry.

Jones was sent to Mr. Barry, but without effect. Mr. Barry would discuss the matter with the lawyer, or, if Augustus was so pleased, with himself; but he was sure that no good would be done by any conversation with Mr. Jones. A month went on. Two months went by; and nothing came of it. "It is no use your coming here, Mr. Scarborough," at last Mr. Barry said to him with but scant courtesy. "We are perfectly sure of our ground. There is not a penny due to you—not a penny. If you will sign certain documents, which I would advise you to do in the presence of your own lawyer, there will be twenty-five thousand pounds for you. You must excuse me if I say that I cannot see you again on the subject—unless you accept your brother's liberality."

At this time Augustus was very short of money, and, as is always the case, those to whom he owed aught became pressing as his readiness to pay them gradually receded. But to be so spoken to by a lawyer—he, Scarborough of Tretton as he had all but been—to be so addressed by a man whom he had regarded as old Grey's clerk, was bitter indeed. He had been so exalted by that Nice marriage, had been so lifted high in the world, that he was now absolutely prostrate. He quarrelled with his lawyer, and he quarrelled also with Septimus Jones. There was no one with whom he could discuss the matter, or rather no one who would discuss it with him on his terms. So, at last, he accepted the money, and went daily into the City, in order that he might turn it into more. What became of him in the City it is hardly the province of this chronicle to tell.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
UNDER THE APPLE BLOSSOMS	1	PENelope	32
A STUDY FROM THE LIFE	13	IN THE GOLDEN PRIME	41
A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY	20	A DANGEROUS SECRET	49
JACK'S SWEETHEART	62		

UNDER THE APPLE BLOSSOMS.

By THEO. GIFT.

CHAPTER I.

"WHY did you die when the lambs were cropping?
You should have died at the apples' dropping,
When Grasshopper comes to trouble,
And wheat-fields are sodden stubble,
And all winds go sighing for sweet things dying,
Why did you die——"

"Mollie," I say reproachfully, "don't sing that dismal ditty. Matters are bad enough, but it hasn't come to dying yet."

"I don't know," says Mollie quite seriously. "I think mother would die if we had to leave the farm."

"Then we won't leave it. I've been thinking hard ever since that letter came, and—Mollie, I've got a plan!"

"A plan!" she repeats, opening her soft eyes half amusedly. "What is it?"

"Come down here and I'll tell you," I answer, rising up on one knee among the meadow grass and cowslips, with my hands full of the latter which I have been gathering. "How can I talk secrets to you up there?"

"Up there" is certainly rather out of secret pitch, for Mollie is seated some way off on the top bar of the gate which divides the meadow from the orchard. A pretty picture she makes there, too, with the grey, lichen-covered apple-boughs, all prinked and tufted with rosy bloom, meeting over her head; beyond her, long alleys of emerald-tinted orchard-grass, diapered in blue and

white with swaying bluebells and fallen blossoms of the pear; and beyond that again, part of the old red-brick farmhouse showing over a tall hedge of holly. She is a pretty creature herself, that sister of mine, tall and slim and fair, with skin like milk and hair of flax, and large, grave, grey eyes. Sitting there now with her hands clasped upon her knee, with the flickering sunlight on her smooth head, and the long, softly-rounded outlines of her limbs just indicated by a little wind which stirs the folds of her dark-blue linen gown and lays back the soft ruffles of yellowish cambric from her sweet white throat and arms, she would make a fit model any day for one of Müller's youthful Madonnas; and, as I gaze at her, the "plan" in my mind is strengthened, all the more that she comes down so submissively and seats herself at my side with a gentle, expectant smile.

"Well, Faith, what is it?" she says; but, perhaps because she looks so good and pretty, I hesitate a little, and my eyes avoid hers and busy themselves in contemplating the lapful of pale pink stalks and golden freckled blossoms I have gathered, ere I say:

"Mother looks dreadfully unhappy to-day, Mollie."

"Yes, doesn't she? I think it is the worry and not knowing whether this man mayn't be at Brentwood even now arranging how soonest to turn us out."

"But can he turn us out, Mollie? I thought the old squire gave father a thirty

years' lease, and that there were still twelve years of it to run."

"Yes, but he reserved the right of raising the rent at any time after the first ten, and directly he was dead the new man sent father word that he must either give up the remainder of his term, or have the rent raised twenty per cent. Father refused to leave; but I really think the trouble of it helped to kill him, for it seems he was often behindhand even with the lower rent, and how can mother pay more now he is gone? Besides, as Lawyer Wackem said in his last letter, now Mr. Randall is coming home he won't guarantee it not being raised again in a little while. The fact is he wants us out of it."

"And yet, Mollie, that's strange, for," looking at her curiously and sinking my voice, "haven't you heard that he was in love with mother once? And he is her first cousin, too. They grew up at Brentwood together. It doesn't seem natural when he has that big place of his own, he should want to turn her and her children out of our poor little home—if he cared for her."

"Ah, but she cared for father, and we are father's children, too," says Mollie quaintly. "But, Faith, what is your plan?"

"I'll tell you in a moment. I've not got it clear yet. How old is mother, Mollie?"

"Forty-two, her last birthday. Why?"

"She looks more," I say gravely, "but women always age more than men when they have worries. I shouldn't wonder, even if Hugh Randall is a little older than she, that he doesn't look it, and you—you like old men, don't you, Mollie?"

"Why, yes, sometimes," she answers, opening her eyes a little at my sudden question; "but Hugh Randall isn't old. He's younger than mother by two or three years. Don't you remember his mother's tombstone—'Died in childbirth, in the first year of her marriage, 1846'? That would make him only thirty-nine."

"Thirty-nine!" I exclaim, springing to my feet and clapping my hands joyfully, and sending thereby a sudden shower of fragrant yellow blossoms all over Mollie's blue gown and innocent, upturned head. "Why, that is not old at all. He is a young man, young enough for anyone, and you are so pretty and so like mother in your ways—Mollie, can't you guess my plan? It's as simple as possible. You *must* marry him."

"Marry—Hugh Randall!" Mollie repeats with rather provoking slowness. "How? Why? What do you mean?"

"What I say," I repeat energetically. "As to the 'how' I've not thought about it yet; but it oughtn't to be difficult. Mr. Randall is coming to Brentwood, if he hasn't come already. Brentwood is only three miles off. Besides, he is our cousin in a way, and our landlord, as we know to our cost. We must meet him sooner or later, and then the only thing is to make him fall in love with you. Don't you see—oh, you stupid Mollie, don't you see—that if you were his wife the farm would be yours too, and he couldn't well turn mother out of it. Mollie, it must be done. You've got to marry Hugh Randall!"

"I beg your pardon," says a voice behind us, "I am afraid I am trespassing, but some one told me there was a right of way to Filday through these fields. Is it true?"

We both start violently—I do, at least, violence and Mollie being words totally incompatible; but the voice is that of a man and a strange one to boot; and the latter is a sufficiently rare circumstance in our small Devonshire village to warrant some little astonishment. To this is added an uncomfortable amount of confusion when, on turning round, we see above the quickset hedge which bounds our cowslip field, the head and shoulders of someone who is not only a man and a stranger, but one too undeniably well looking, well dressed, and comely in all respects not to set most maidens' pulses fluttering. It has the effect at any rate of robbing me altogether of my wonted readiness of speech, and so of leaving Mollie to answer:

"Not these fields. You should have gone down to the bottom of the one you have just left, and then crossed a stile into the water-meadows. There is a path there which leads into the high-road; but you can get to it more quickly this way, and you are quite at liberty to do so if you please, and if you do not mind getting over the gate. It is padlocked."

How sweet Mollie's voice is, soft and sweet as cream, and how modest and graceful she looks standing there in the shade of the budding oak-boughs, with the cowslips at her feet and in her hands! It is no wonder that the stranger's eyes rest on her with an admiration which needs no words to express it, or that his tone has a decided accession of respect in it as he answers, lifting his hat:

"Thank you very much. I have been

fishing since breakfast-time and have a friend waiting for me in Filday, so I shall be glad to be spared the longer route. Let me pick up your cowslips first, however. I am afraid I was the cause of your dropping them."

He has laid one hand on the gate while speaking, and vaulted over it with an ease which speaks the elasticity of youth; and yet he is not a very young man either. The thick brown beard and moustache which hide so much of the handsome face tell that as much as a certain careless ease of manner rare in men under thirty. His glance towards me, seventeen years old as I am, is such as one might cast on a child; and indeed, with my small pale face, and hair cut short, and waving in a boyish, nut-brown crop about it, I do look very young.

"Were you making a cowslip ball?" he says, smiling at me, though his eyes wander quietly to Mollie all the while. "I wish you had finished it before I came; I haven't seen one since I was a child, and I would have begged it of you in exchange for one of these trout here."

There are half-a-dozen of them—fat, speckled fellows glittering like silver in the basket slung across his shoulders, and as I think of mother, and how she used to enjoy those old Mr. Randall used to send her from time to time, I almost wish I had the cowslip ball to give him; but Mollie knows better, and when he adds, turning to her openly this time, "May I leave one behind me anyhow as toll for this pleasant short cut?" she answers at once:

"Thank you, but no, that is not at all necessary. You are quite welcome to it, and you will see the high-road at the other side of the stile there."

It is a dismissal, for all that it is spoken with a dove's eyes and voice of honey; and the stranger takes it as such. With a slight apology for the offer, and another expression of thanks, he lifts his hat again and goes; and as his tall wiry figure crosses the stile and disappears between the blossoming hedgerows, we two maidens stand and look at one another smiling. Mollie's cheeks are rather pink.

"Why didn't you let him give us a trout?" I say. "Wouldn't it have been proper? And, oh, Mollie, who can he be?"

"I don't know. No one belonging to this neighbourhood or we should have seen him before; but if he has been fishing in the Brint he must have a license from

Lawyer Wackem or be a friend of Mr. Randall's. Perhaps he is staying at Brentwood."

"Oh, dear!" I cry with a guilty start, "I hope he didn't hear what we were saying," and then almost before the words are out of my mouth I wish them unuttered; for an idea has flashed across my mind, an idea purely hypothetical, possibly absurd, but which I would not for the world should occur to Mollie if my "plan" is to have any chance of success. It is a relief to me that she answers so tranquilly:

"Why, Faith, of course not. He was on the other side of the hedge, and we were not talking loud. Besides, it was all nonsense."

"Indeed it was not," I answer warmly; but at that moment mother is heard calling to us from the orchard; and, nonsense or not, I feel instinctively that the subject is not one that I should care to enter on before her. Somehow neither Mollie nor I ever speak of Hugh Randall, and but rarely of Brentwood, before our mother, though the one is her cousin and the other was her girlhood's home. Not that we have been forbidden to do so, but that we have noticed that she never alludes to them of her own accord, and that when others do so she invariably answers with severest brevity, and makes haste to quit the subject in a way which shows us it is distasteful, if not painful, to her.

For this reason our knowledge of the family history is slight. We know of course that Squire Randall was a widower with an infant son, and that his wife's sister, a widow with one daughter, kept house for him and took care of his child until her death; when the daughter (our mother) assumed the housekeeping keys, and two or three years later married the squire's secretary and bailiff, one Luke Purcell: also that the squire's son went abroad as a young man, and, as some said, settled in the East Indies where he had remained ever since; not even coming home on his father's death.

But besides these bald facts, and behind them, there is a story, an old commonplace story enough, but which we only know by bits and hints, of two cousins growing up together in a big manor farm, and of the boy learning to love the girl with a lover's love while yet she only cared for him "as cousins care"; a story also of a male friend brought home by the boy when he returned from school for the last time, made welcome by the squire, and at the son's entreaty

retained as secretary and right-hand man to the old gentleman when the youth was sent away to finish his education in Germany; finally of the friend falling in love with the squire's niece and persuading her into a secret marriage which naturally had to be confessed before long, but which the uncle was persuaded to forgive, even allowing (being very fond of his niece) the young couple to stay on in the old place as before.

All this, as I have said, is a commonplace little romance enough; for indeed even Mollie and I, little versed as we are in love matters, know that it is no strange thing for cousins to fall in love with one another, or for one to be disappointed. What seemed strange to me was the passionate bitterness with which Hugh Randall, though only nineteen, took his disappointment. He came home from Germany quite suddenly about a week after the avowal of his cousin's marriage, and not only quarrelled desperately with her husband, the friend who had supplanted him, and his father for not espousing his cause, but carried his wrath to the extent of leaving Brentwood forthwith and betaking himself to foreign parts.

I always thought Squire Randall a very proud-looking old man, and I suppose it was pride as much as father's usefulness to him which made him hold out for some time. Our Mollie was even born at Brentwood; but shortly after that event something happened which made my parents exchange that home for our present one; and by-and-by the squire engaged someone in father's place. There was no absolute quarrel between them, but the coolness which began then lasted till the day of the squire's death, and rather increased than diminished as time went on. True, father held this farm at an almost nominal rent, and presents of hot-house grapes, jelly, or game were sent from the big house when there was any case of illness at ours; but it was a sore come down, all the same, after the practical headship at Brentwood, and my father felt aggrieved all the time. Nor was he successful in his new life. There are men who can manage other people's property better than their own, and double a large income while they fritter to waste a small one. Father must have been one of them. Brentwood is a great big place with two or three outlying farms attached to it and needing a very shrewd head to look after it satisfactorily; yet everyone agreed that it had never

paid so well as when father was at Mr. Randall's elbow. Now that he had nothing to manage but a very small dairy and fruit farm he seemed to have no heart or notion how to do it; but shut himself up with his books and accounts and scientific treatises, and let things go as they would. It was mother then who took the reins; put away all her pretty dresses and drawing-room ways; set herself to make butter and clotted cream like any other small dairy-farmer's wife; took the superintendence of the orchard; and worked like a slave at the picking, packing, and sending off of great baskets of rosy-cheeked apples, pears, brown and juicy, and glorious purple plums with a silver bloom on them, to the Exeter market.

Mother is a good, brave woman, one of those who will always put their shoulder to the stiffest wheel and make no moan about it; and I will say this, if poor father let her take the hardest share, as some folks have been unkind enough to say, he loved her with an almost worshiping love for doing it, and repaid her with never failing gentle words and caresses, and by teaching us French and Latin and mental philosophy, which are not things that every dairy-farmer's daughters know.

CHAPTER II.

It is an April evening two or three days after the one recorded in the last chapter, and I am wending my way homewards from an errand on which mother has sent me. It was to obtain a few eggs of an especially fine breed of Black Spanish hens from a farm about three miles distant; and I have them now in a basket nicely packed in cotton-wool, and am walking slowly, partly for their greater safety, partly because I am in no hurry and like to enjoy the evening.

In truth it is too beautiful a one to be wasted. Far away in the west the sky is a lovely apple-yellow, shading by delicate transmissions into pure green and thence again into blue, athwart which float long feathery clouds of tawny amber. The distant beech-woods of Bagely Manor stand out in dusky purple, their rounded outlines massed against this gold, or, where one tall tree rises above its fellows, traceried as in pen and ink upon a primrose field. Between them and me stretches a broad expanse of marshland covered with coarse reddish-brown rushes, with patches of emerald moss and pollard willows, and pools of shining, golden water wherein

dabchicks and marsh fowl of all sorts dive and flap and flutter, sending showers of glittering drops high over the furry silver of the young palm-buds which are just coming into their full beauty for Eastertide. The solitary sandy road I am traversing winds along this marsh and is flanked at the other side by a steep wooded hill, clad in every delicate tint of brown, and mauve, and pink, and early green, and finishing in a tall headland beyond which one can just distinguish a streak of violet glittering as with gold-dust in the setting sun. But it is not at this I am looking, dear as that distant glimpse of the sea is to me; but at something still brighter and more inviting to my gaze: a strip of bog not far from the road, and dark and treacherous to view, but overlaid with a pattern of gay green leaves and blossoms whose brilliant gold would "make a sunshine in the shadiest place," the first marsh-marigolds of the year opening their burnished cups in splendid solitude.

It is not in human nature to resist them; not in mine at any rate. I set down my basket of eggs incontinently, force my way through the tangled willow-boughs, and now planting my foot on a half-submerged root, now clinging to a stiff hazel twig, now nearly engulfed by a treacherous tuft of slippery grass, I reach the bed of golden blossoms, and am just reaching out my arm to grasp at a handful when the stone on which I am standing gives a sudden gurgling slide downwards, my feet slip from beneath me, and but for the clutch I still have on one of the sturdy boughs aforementioned, I should be floating on my back like a second Ophelia. As it is I am ankle-deep in mud, and sinking further with each attempt to extricate myself; therefore I shriek loudly for aid, and, getting no answer, shriek again.

This time it comes. The road is a lonely one, not much frequented at any time save by rush-cutters and fish-carts, the latter wending their way to Bagely and the neighbouring hamlets, from the little fishing port of Newton-Trevor which lies hidden behind that great brown headland; but now my cry is greeted by an answering "Hallo!" and next moment I can hear steps coming rapidly nearer and a second shout, "Hallo, there! Where are you?"

"Here! Oh, make haste!" I scream, clinging for dear life to my hazel-bough which bends cruelly beneath the strain, and then, thank goodness! it is over. There is a crashing among the thicket in

my rear, a sudden splash, the grasp of a strong hand lifting me bodily out of the quagmire, and next moment I am half dragged, half carried through the reeds and planted in safety on the bank by an individual, whom, till then, I do not recognise as the stranger who a few days back invaded our cowslip field.

It is rather a humiliating position. My hat has fallen off, my long rough cloak of Connemara-red has twisted round hind part before, and my feet and ankles are encased in a black coating of mud which leaves slimy impressions on the tender green grass. I am conscious that I look younger, more like an unkempt mischievous child than ever; and what is worse, I can see that the stranger's eyes are laughing so uncontrollably that despite my vexation I am fain to laugh also, though with sufficient shakiness to make him look grave and apologise.

"Oh, you needn't do that," I say, smiling more readily. "Indeed I am very, very much obliged to you. I don't know how deep the water is there, so I might have been drowned if you hadn't come by in time."

"Hardly!" he says cruelly. "I was all over that bit after birds the other day, and it isn't ten inches deep anywhere. That wouldn't drown you."

"The water might not, but how about the mud?" I retort. "Just look at my feet! And it was all for nothing too. I only brought this away," opening my small wet hand, and showing him a fragment of green stalk and one mangled flower. He laughs again, which is unkind.

"Oh, were you after those yellow things? Why, there will be lots out in the water-meadows at the bottom of your own fields before long."

"Ah, but the meadow ones are never as fine as these, and these bloom first. Mollie and I always come here for them, and I wanted them for Mollie," I say piteously. My companion's expression changes.

"Did you? Wait a moment then, and you shall have as many as you like," he answers cheerily, and strides off among the weeds and rushes to appear again a moment later with a huge dripping bunch of green and gold which he hands me, saying, "Will that content—Mollie; or shall I get you some more?"

"No, thank you, that is heaps. She will be delighted. I must hurry home, though, my feet are so wet. Oh, where are my eggs?"

"You can't carry them and that bundle of plants as well," says the stranger as I take up the basket, fortunately intact. "Let me help you. I am going your way." And as I see no reason to the contrary, he does so, and walks at my side, asking presently, "What do you call these—buttercups?"

"Buttercups? No; marsh-marigolds; don't you know them?"

"I suppose I did once; but I have been out of England long enough to forget the names of English flowers, though like enough I may have picked them in this very spot as a boy."

"Did you live here then? I don't remember you."

"Probably not, as you were certainly not born when I left; but I did live very near here all the same."

I am silent. That wild fleeting idea which just flashed across my brain after our previous meeting has come back to me with a rush that fairly takes my colour away. Is it a heaven-sent instinct, I wonder, and he—can he be——? Oh, what a glorious chance for us all if it be true and I can make for mother a friend out of an enemy, and for Mollie—— My breath comes in little gasps as I nearly choke under the rush of disconnected thoughts, and he observes it and says kindly:

"You are out of breath. Don't walk so fast. I am sure Mollie—that is your sister I suppose?—looks far too good and gentle to be glad of flowers at the expense of your tiring yourself out and getting wet feet into the bargain."

Involuntarily I gasp again. If he thinks that of Mollie now——! But it will never do to waste my time in silence and staring. I may never have such another opportunity, and already I can see the clustered chimneys of our farm peeping above the snowy wreath of pear and plum blossom which encircles it like a bridal garland. Far off the peewits are sending their shrill trembling cry across the dusky marshland. The saffron-coloured sky is deepening into rose colour and the purple woods to black. It is getting late, and every step brings us nearer home.

"You are quite right," I say earnestly; "Mollie is good, through I don't know how you guessed it. She," with great emphasis, "is the best person I know anywhere. If you ask anyone near here they will tell you the same."

"They will tell me at any rate that she has a little sister who is very fond of her,"

he says, smiling; then as he sees me colour guiltily: "No, I am not laughing at you. Sisters ought to love one another; and if yours is half as sweet and loveable as her face would make one think you have good right to do so. She—she was not vexed at my taking advantage of her permission the other day, was she?"

"Vexed? No," I answer quickly. "Why should you think so?" and the thought rises in my mind: "If you be the person I believe you to be you must know you have a right to cross our fields without permission at all."

"Well, she sent me away rather quickly," he says, with a slightly aggrieved laugh, "and she would not take my trout. I am afraid she thought me impertinent for offering them."

"Oh dear no," I answer reassuringly, "you need never fear that with Mollie. I sometimes think unkind things of people; but not she—ever. If she was a little grave the other day it was because she was not feeling very happy, that was all."

"Not feeling happy? Why—but perhaps I ought not to ask," he puts in, checking himself in his somewhat imperious questioning; but I answer quite gravely and innocently:

"Oh yes, you may; it is no secret. Do you see that farm-house there, the one in the orchard we are coming to?"

"Plumtree Farm? I—I mean the one among the pear-trees—yes."

"Well," growing very red, and speaking rather fast, for he has betrayed himself by that familiar mention of the house, and, as I can see, is vexed at having done so, "that is our home, and we love it—Mollie loves it dearly, and very soon we shall be turned out of it. Isn't that enough to make one unhappy?" I have not alluded to mother's love for it, because I cannot form sufficient guess as to a certain person's feelings towards mother to make it safe to do so; but, as I glance timidly at him to see the effect of my words, I perceive that his face has reddened deeply beneath its swarthy tint, and there is a decided constraint in his voice as he asks:

"Who is going to turn you out—your landlord?"

"So Lawyer Wackem says," I answer, almost too frightened now to keep my own voice steady; but making a brave effort to do so all the same. "He—he told mother that Mr. Randall wanted it for himself; but he has Brentwood, all that beautiful place, and Buggins's Farm and Elmtree

Cottages as well. Do you think he can really want our little farm too; and when he knows that it is all that we have, and that we cannot pay any more rent for it if we tried ever so?"

For a minute my companion does not answer; then he says, in the same stiff manner as before:

"Perhaps he does not know how much you care about the place. Has your mother spoken to him?"

"No," I answer sadly, "she cannot; they are not friends, at least he is not friends with her. She never told us how it was," I put in hurriedly, feeling that a "certain person" might be displeased if he thought his early love-affairs had been babbled about to a chit like myself, "but it was something that happened when mother was a girl, and they say he has never forgiven her; and so——"

"And so he wants to turn you out of your home, and raises your rent as he can't do so in any other way," says the stranger coolly. "But, in that case, what a very malicious sort of person he must be!"

I am trembling all over now. It is no use trying to conceal it. My knees are knocking together, and my face is dyed with blushes, for which no reflection from those rosy clouds, which are now flushing the pear-blossoms to a rosy pink, can satisfactorily account. The first impulse—born of mingled cowardice and politeness—is of course to deny the imputation, which, indeed, is made in a tone of sufficient offence to almost necessitate an immediate apology; but love is stronger than fear, and love for mother and Mollie is sharpening my wits to-day to a wonderful degree.

"If," I think to myself, "a certain person dislikes even to be accused of malice, he can hardly like to be guilty of it;" and my courage rises with the thought. "Well, it would be cruel—rather, wouldn't it?" I say mildly, but avoiding to look him in the face the while, "and—and for that reason you can't wonder that, though Mr. Randall is our cousin, we—Mollie and I, that is—feel rather sore about it, or that we—even Mollie, you know—can't like him as much as she might otherwise have done."

There is a moment's silence, just long enough for me to have time to think to myself, "So now, if you want her to like you better, as, from what you said just now, I fancy you do, you know how to set about it," and then he speaks, looking

at me full and keenly, yet with a severity in the glance beneath which I shrink beforehand.

"No, I don't wonder at it at all. My wonder is for something very different, namely, that feeling this, and disliking your cousin as you say you do, nay, as his mean and revengeful character warrants you in doing, you should, nevertheless, be so anxious to force the sister—whom you also say you love—into that marriage with him which I think you were urging on her the first time I saw you, and which would, of course, oblige her to leave the home so dear to her, whatever it might do for you. I do wonder at that, I confess."

There is no answer. For once I am silenced, crushed. I simply stand gazing at him with fallen lip and eyes of blank dismay, and after a second he adds, a decided touch of contempt in his tones:

"Perhaps I ought to apologise for alluding to a conversation not meant for my ears; but I—well, I happen to know Mr. Randall; and, when young ladies discuss a matrimonial plan, which certainly affects him as well as them, with such energy as to be audible on the other side of their boundary wall, they can hardly complain if they are overheard."

Again he is unanswered. He may say what he likes now without fear of reply; for what reply is there, and where, oh, where are the "matrimonial plans" now, to which he alludes so sarcastically? It is a comfort that we have reached our own garden, and that I can grasp the mossy gate-post for support, for the shock has turned me dizzy as well as dumb. To think that all the time—all the time, when I thought I was leading him up so cleverly to the desired consummation, he was simply leading me on to expose my poor little machinery for the same, and then destroy it with a breath. One thing is certain, not only that he will never marry Mollie now, and that all his expressions of interest in her must have been simply to draw me out, but that I have made matters far worse than they were before; and, oh, what a fool I have been, and what would Mollie, what would mother, say to me if they knew!

They do not know. For that at least I may be thankful. Perhaps it is well for rather pert people, with a prevailing idea that they are a little more brilliant than the rest of the world about them, to get a regular downfall once in a way and be made to feel smaller than the veriest

"Colin Clout" of the community, but the process is not a pleasant one, and I am swallowing a sufficiently large dose of humiliation at present to feel grateful that nobody guesses at it at home, where things go on just the same as usual, only a little more sadly.

It is known for certain now that Hugh Randall is back at Brentwood. Some one says he has only come down to nurse a sick friend whom he has brought with him for change of air, while others assert that he means to make it his permanent home once more, and that he has begun by starting a steam-plough and raising his rents all round.

But though thus much filters to us in the way of gossip, mother's habit of silence, particularly where her family matters are concerned, has made people in general rather shy of speaking to us of a person who is known to be related to us, and about whom, although estranged, we may be supposed to have the earliest information.

As for Lawyer Wackem, he has neither called nor written since that letter which first suggested my ill-fated "plan." Mother answered it by offering to give up the long meadow—our best grazing one—if we might keep the rest of the farm at the old rent until the expiration of our lease; but there has been no reply to this, and as we stand in the dairy, one fresh cool morning, packing rolls of sweet, fragrant, saffron-coloured butter in their envelopes of clean white linen for the market, mother says, with a worried look in the great brown eyes which mine are said to resemble:

"Don't waste the stuff in tearing it, Faith; you've but just enough for that quantity of butter. How much is it, Mollie?"

"Nineteen pounds, mother; that's two for ourselves, and two for the vicarage, and one for Miss Gwynnis, and—let me see, fourteen for the market. Old John will have a grand load when he calls for the basket," says Mollie's voice, sweet and cheerful as usual, but mother isn't cheered by it to-day.

"Ah!" she says, sighing, "I wonder how long it will be before he has none to call for—none of my making, at least. I was thinking yesterday we've not had such a spring for fruit promise these six years. Scarce an east wind ever since the apples were in bloom; but it won't matter if we aren't here to gather them when they're ripe."

"No news is good news, mother dear," says Mollie gently.

"And especially with regard to Hugh Randall," I burst in, by no means gently, but rather with a new access of bitterness against that gentleman which has come upon me ever since the evening of my luckless adventure after marsh-mari-golds ten days previously. Hitherto no one has paid much attention to it, but now when I go on to add, "I am sure we have never heard any good of him," mother takes me up with an amount of coldness and displeasure so unwonted as to startle us both.

"I do not think you have ever heard much of him at all, Faith, and certainly no evil. Try, my child, not to let your tongue get too sharp. It is a pert habit and not an amiable one;" and then, without waiting for an answer—perhaps a little startled by her own severity—she goes away out of the dairy, leaving me crimson and confused, and feeling that this, too, I owe to Hugh Randall. Mother—mother who never scolds anyone—has scolded me!

CHAPTER III.

"POOR Faith!" says Mollie, looking at me with tender compassion; "I'm so sorry, but what has made you take such a hatred to Hugh Randall of late? After all, the farm is his, and, as mother says, he hasn't done anything yet."

"Except get me a scolding and help me to make a fool of myself!" I think, though I dare not say it in words, for even Mollie, gentle as she is, might scold too if I were to make confession of the cause of my wrath, and after a minute she says in a different tone:

"Who do you think I've seen twice lately, Fay? But you'll never guess, so I'll tell you. The gentleman who asked leave to come through our fields that day. Do you remember?"

Do I remember! Now if only Mollie could see the colour of my face, but fortunately hers is turned the other way, all but one little ear which, strangely enough, is rather pink too.

"When? Where? Why didn't you tell me?" I ask all in a hurry.

Mollie smiles.

"When? The first time, three days ago; but that was merely at a distance. Only he saw me and lifted his hat, and then turned back a second to put the gate open for me he had just passed through. It was civil, wasn't it, Faithie?"

No answer.

"And the second time was yesterday. He overtook me in that lane at the bottom of the vicarage garden, and walked a little way with me. He said—— Faith, why didn't you tell me that it was he who picked those marsh-marigolds for me the day your feet got so wet trying for them? He asked very kindly if you had caught cold after it."

"Did he!" I say with a little toss of my head, then suddenly: "And what else did he say to you?"

"Oh, a great many things. He—— Faith, do you know who he is?"

My heart gives a great jump.

"Why? Do you?" I ask, wondering.

"Yes," she says quite simply, "for I asked him. You see, he seemed to know all about us, and to be so—so interested; and he said that was natural, because he was a friend of our cousin Hugh Randall. He is staying at Brentwood, he says, so you see," with a bright, innocent look, "he must know him pretty well."

For a minute I am speechless; then wrath at the deception practised on her gives me voice.

"A friend of Hugh Randall's," I repeat ironically. "Ah, I don't doubt that, or that he knows him better than anyone else."

But Mollie interrupts me.

"Yes, that's exactly what he says; and he tells me Mr. Randall is not at all a harsh or grasping sort of man. Faith," looking up at me with the loveliest little touch of warm colour in her face; the tips of her pretty fingers just resting on the roll of yellow butter; the sunlight flickering through a trellis of young vine-leaves on her sweet face, her white round arms bared to the elbow, and her gown of lilac cotton; and beyond, the spotless red-brick floor and white walls of the dairy, with its broad shelves lined with rows of great earthenware milk-pans; "Faith, whatever Hugh Randall is, I do think his friend is rather nice; don't you?"

I cannot help it. I try, but it is no use.

"No," I say vehemently, "I don't. I think him detestable. I—I always thought so."

And then, for fear of more, I catch up my hat and one of the rolls of butter, and muttering something about Miss Gwynnis, make a dash for the door and escape.

In truth, I feel as if I must get away, for fear lest I should do more harm than I have done already.

My first impulse is, naturally, to expose Mr. Randall's silly deception (Alas! who but our Mollie would have been so simple as to be taken in by that well-worn fiction of "a friend"?), and not only tell her who he is, but how he played eavesdropper to our foolish plans, and then led me on to carry them out by singing her (Mollie's) praises to him. But there is an old proverb, "Once bit, twice shy," and my past folly has made me fearful of fresh. Perhaps the man wishes to be friends with us, after all. Perhaps his admiration of Mollie is more genuine than the character he has assumed for her benefit; and if so, would it be wise to set her against him, and so anger him further—he who holds our future in his hands? Undoubtedly it is safer for me to be out of the house than in it this morning.

It is fortunate, therefore, that there is that butter to take to Miss Gwynnis. She is a very old woman, and was once house-keeper to Squire Randall before my grandmother came to live with him and fulfil the duties of that post herself.

I have sometimes thought it was for this reason that Miss Gwynnis has never shown any great love for either mother or ourselves; but, indeed, she loves no one very much, being paralysed on one side and sadly hard of hearing—afflictions which have cut her off from her kind, and soured a temper never over-sweet. She's a good woman, is Miss Gwynnis. She wouldn't say an untrue thing of her worst enemy, but if there is a true thing to say which is also disagreeable, then I do think she takes a deep pleasure in saying it—for which reason I am not usually fond of volunteering to take her that weekly supply of butter, which mother always takes care she shall have, whoever else comes short.

She receives me to-day in her usual way—i.e., with a torrent of reproaches for the length of time that has elapsed since Mollie and I last visited her; with complainings of her own aches and pains; finally, as I half expected, with mention of our landlord.

"And so Hugh Randall's back at last, and time enough for't too! Not that I've seen him. He'd never think o' coming near a poor, half-dead old woman like me, for all I was ever his friend more than your mother's."

"You needn't say that to my mother's daughter, Miss Gwynnis, and," with a touch of petulance, "as for Hugh Randall, I don't at all doubt his memory is better

as an enemy than a friend at most times."

"I'll say the truth of anybody," retorts Miss Gwynnis, "and to prove it, let me tell you your mother's daughter is the last person to throw stones at the man you're speaking of, and so she ought to have taught you."

"Mother never throws stones at anybody, Miss Gwynnis. I wish I could speak as kindly as she does of Hugh Randall."

"And why shouldn't she, child? She never suffered any wrong at his hands, while he—— Good Lord, to think o' the folly of it! Nineteen years o' life exiled from his own country for the sake of a love which could let itself be tricked away from him!"

"What do you mean, Miss Gwynnis? Who tricked him? Not mother, I'm sure. She couldn't."

"No, but your father could and did. His best friend too! and that's the truth also, though 'tis of the dead I say it."

"I suppose you mean that they both were in love with mother, and that she took a man in preference to a boy," I answer haughtily. "Why, Miss Gwynnis, I've seen him, and he looks years and years younger than she does even now. It seems almost wrong to think of such a thing between them."

"Aye, a mother's always an old woman to her children, and yours has had her share o' troubles to age her; but there are only four years between them, child; and there didn't seem that in the old days when he was in love with her and gave her in charge to Luke Purcell, your father, to watch over and guard for him till his return."

"Did he do that?" I ask a little sadly, for indeed I had never heard of it before.

"Aye, did he; and I heard him. 'Twas the day he was leaving for Germany to finish his education, and I was in his room seeing that nought had been left behind, when he came into the study adjoining with Luke Purcell; and said he, laying both his hands on the other's shoulders:

"'One last charge, Luke! You know how I love Mary, and that my one aim in life is to wed her and make her mistress here in truth. I know at least that she loves no man better than me. Watch over her for me, and keep her in that mind. 'Tis the only thing I ask of you in return for what you're pleased to say I've done for you.'

"'If I can—if she'll let me——' your father said, but Hugh interrupted him:

"'Put your own feelings for me into your talk of me. Remind her how true and strong is the love I bear her; and above all, let me have the earliest warning of any rival with her. Promise me that, Luke.'

"'I promise,' said Luke.

"'Then strike hands on it,' said Hugh, giving him his hand, 'for, if I lost Mary, I should never care to set foot in this place again, or in any other where hers had rested.'

"They went away after that, and I saw no more of them; but you know how it ended—how when Hugh came home he found his fine friend: the friend he had picked up as a half-starved usher in a school, and had given a home in his father's house at his father's right hand: married to the girl he loved, and she already in the way to be a mother, without one word having been breathed of it to him or anybody till discovery was too near to be averted. No wonder he wouldn't sleep under the same roof with them, but shook the dust off his feet and went away the same day. The wonder is to me that he'd sufficient pity for the woman's state not to take her husband by the throat and chuck him out o' doors instead."

"Oh, Miss Gwynnis, don't!" I cry, flushing. "But did he tell the squire? Surely if he did, and if it was true——"

"The old man would have turned your father off the premises and had his son back? Aye, but I doubt if he ever was told—properly. He was away the day Hugh returned, and the young fellow only wrote to him that he'd found out Luke Purcell for a false dishonest villain, and that one or other of them must leave Brentwood."

"And did father stay? Oh, Miss Gwynnis——"

"Yes, my dear, he did. I'm not blaming him for that. He loved your mother dearly, I do believe; and he knew that her love for him had already cost her the mistressship of Brentwood, and, if he let himself be turned out, would cost her bread, and meat, and shelter too. He'd nothing of his own, you see; nor she neither; and though he might have gone back to teaching, or tried for another secretaryship, the getting one at once would ha' been but a chance, and too poor a one, to risk with her in her condition. Besides, he'd got a vast of influence over

the squire, who was nearly blind, you know ; and maybe he hoped Hugh's anger would blow over. Anyhow, he persuaded the old man it would ; and that the affair was nothing but a fit of jealousy in a passionate boy ; and he got him, in consequence, to write to Hugh a jesting sort of letter, saying he thought he was as good a judge as his son of Luke's worth or worthlessness ; that the latter was of great use to him, and that if he had forgiven him for marrying Mary, he was not going to take back his forgiveness because a hot-headed schoolboy chose to get up a bit of romance about her. The squire told me of the letter himself, and said he had bade the lad come back at once and not be a fool ; but all the answer he got was a note cold and short enough :

“ ‘ You have chosen to stand by a scoundrel instead of by your son. I have no right to dispute your choice, but make the most of him, and take care he doesn't deceive you too. H. R. ’ ”

“ It was written from on board ship, and all they knew of him for a long time afterwards was that he was alive and somewhere in the East Indies ; but by-an'-by, I suppose the truth of the story leaked out—it don't matter how—and determined the squire to compromise matters. He wouldn't turn his niece and her husband adrift, but he got another manager and gave your father Plumtree Farm at a long lease and a light rent, and Luke had to take it and be thankful. I don't believe he was thankful, however, and as time went on and Hugh never came back, I've heard there were bitter words more than once between him and the old man. Aye, 'tis a sorry story all round, but the chief sufferer in it was young Randall, for 'twas no boyish fancy that made him give up home, and father, and friends, and go out to seek his fortune in the wide world ; and it isn't for you, Faith Purcell, to sharpen your tongue on him now he has come home at last to his own. ”

Indeed I feel that I never shall again. Overhead the sky is a deep, pure blue, chased over by a feathery flight of snow-white clouds, through which in swift sharp rays of light and shade the sunlight sweeps across the wooded glades. Spring has put on her robe of green, and filled with April showers the frothing streams. The hedgerows are white with scented may, the copses carpeted with blue-bells. The

greenfinch “ cheeps ” from the thorn, lambs frisk at the mother's side, and

Larks go singing, singing, singing,
Over the cornfields wide.

But there is a weight on my young heart and a dimness in my eyes which ill accord with the April sunshine. I wish Miss Gwynnis had never told me this story. I feel so sorry for all the actors in it, my mother, my father, the old squire, even—yes, most of all for the man who “ suffered most ; ” and while I am thinking of it, and trying to make excuses for the seeming treachery of the one friend by the strength of that love which in the other had woke such unnatural bitterness, my heart gives a sudden leap, and then seems to stand still ; for coming towards me along the country road, I see a tall, manly figure walking beside another which reclines in a bath-chair drawn by a sturdy lad.

It is Hugh Randall and his invalid guest. They are quite close to me before I even see them ; but in my present mood I feel it quite impossible to go on and confront them. Fortunately, however, there is a gate opening into a ploughed field on my left hand ; and at the risk of appearing rude, awkward, cowardly, what you will, I turn abruptly, and crossing the lane make my escape through it with a speed which almost approaches a run as I find myself in safety on the other side, and screened from view by a tall hedge.

Alas ! it is a brief safety. The next moment my ears have caught the sound of the gate swinging to for the second time ; and in another minute there is a clear pleasant voice at my side, saying :

“ Are you going to quarrel with me altogether, Miss Faith, that you run away at the first sight of me as if I were an ogre ? ”

I stand still at once. Indeed it is not easy to run or even walk away quickly over a stiff ploughed-up soil ; but oh, how little time it takes to bring about a complete revulsion in one's feelings ! A second back I was feeling pitiful, compunctious, almost reverential over this man. Now, as I look up into his brown handsome face and bright eyes full of latent laughter, I ask myself, is it possible that nearly twenty years of loss and bitterness can ever have passed over his brow and left it so unruffled, that anything more than his own will and pleasure can have sent him forth, a lonely exile, for the best half of a man's life ? Perhaps he sees the troubled

bewilderment of it in my eyes, for he adds more earnestly :

"Indeed, I had no intention of offending you the other day. On the contrary, I wanted very much to make friends, and I want it still more now, and to ask you to help me—if you will."

There is a colour in his face which makes him look younger and comelier than ever. When I think of my pale, worn, middle-aged mother—Heaven bless her!—the discrepancy between them almost amounts to an impertinence, and I feel my father fully excused.

"How can I help you?" I ask, colouring confusedly. "I would if I could, and I am not at all offended; but I don't see——"

"How?" he interrupts quickly. "Oh, I'll easily tell you; for it's not so much your doing as abstaining from doing anything that I want. Will you promise me not to use your influence (I am aware you have a great deal) with your sister to make her dislike me—no, I know you haven't done so yet; though I'm afraid I gave you cause the other day; but I have seen her once or twice since then, and I can see she thinks very much of you, as much as you do of her——"

"You did not believe in my thinking of her the other day," I answer with a quivering lip; but he stops me.

"Oh yes, I did. That was only a jest; but I was a little angry with you besides for wanting to marry so sweet a sister to a man she had never seen, and did not like, simply because he was well-to-do; I am well-to-do also, however, quite as well-to-do as he is, and little as I have seen of your Mollie, I like her so well, that if she could care—if you could teach her to care for me in return, I would not only try to make her happy, but——"

"You would let mother stay on in the farm?" I cry so eagerly that he smiles.

"I don't think you need ask that. It is true that I did come here with the express intention of taking possession of it; but if it is mine, and even if your sister would not be my wife, she need never fear my turning her out of it. Do you think she would be cruel enough to refuse me, however? I am a little old for her, perhaps," looking at me rather wistfully; "but, after all, though Ceylon suns have aged me to look at, I'm not much over thirty, and my heart is young enough at any rate; for I never cared for any woman yet till I saw her

standing under the oak-tree that day with the cowslips in her hand."

If he had only not said that! and I was beginning to like him so well. There is an involuntary touch of scorn in my voice as I ask :

"Have you forgotten our mother, Cousin Hugh? Because it is not my influence you will want with Mollie, but hers, and if you tell her that——"

"Your mother!" he repeats, staring. "If I ever saw her I have forgotten her certainly; but I was such a baby when my people left Devonshire that's not to be wondered at; and why do you call me 'cousin'?"

"Why, are you not our cousin?" I say, half sobbing. "I—I thought you were Hugh Randall. I——" But the laugh that follows that announcement drowns the remainder.

"I Hugh Randall! Why, that is Hugh out in the lane there. I am only his friend, Russell Galway. I told your sister so."

"But we heard—someone in the village said Mr. Randall's friend was a great invalid."

"Then, like most gossips, someone in the village got hold of the wrong end of the story. It is poor Randall who is the invalid. I am nothing but his ex-partner in a coffee-plantation in Ceylon, and present guest while I look about for a bit of land on which to settle down at home. Faith, will you not come and speak to your cousin? I have been telling him about you and your sister, and he wants to see you greatly. Indeed he is not at all what you think him."

And somehow, in another moment—for how can I refuse?—I am standing beside the bath-chair in the lane with my hand clasped in that of a thin, worn looking man, who may be any age to judge from his silvered hair and the lines upon his brow, and whose dark passionate eyes look into mine with a wistful scrutiny which awes me strangely.

"I think your name must be Mary," is one of the first things he says; and when I tell him, "No, I am only Faith," he answers: "You have your mother's eyes. You should bear her name; but yours is a good one, too. Will you have 'faith' in me, my child, and cease to look on me as an enemy any longer? I have been wrong and foolish in carrying an old resentment so far that when I decided on coming home to end my days, I thought I could not bear to live in the same place with

the man who was the object of it. I did not know then, however, that God had already settled the matter for me, or that he was no more. Lawyer Wackem far exceeded his instructions in every way, and you must tell your mother so. Tell her also that I have promised to sell Plumtree Farm to a man for a wedding present to his wife; but," with a kindly smile at his friend, "I do not think she will find her occupancy disturbed by that. If it should, she and you must e'en come back to Brentwood, and take care of a poor invalid instead. Should you dislike that very much, little Faith?"

And I cannot say I should. There is one word I must add, however: I have ceased to consider myself the brilliant member of the family.

A STUDY FROM THE LIFE.

By PAUL BLAKE.

CHAPTER I.

It was a cold drizzly evening in February, the streets were a sea of mud, the weather was of the sort known in Scotland as "saft." However, Charlton's chambers looked snug enough; the fire was bright, the curtains drawn close. The occupant of the sitting-room was ensconced in a big armchair, smoking a very deeply coloured meerschaum; he looked as comfortable as possible. It was a perfect haven of refuge to one coming from the miserable streets; at least it looked so to Welby as he pushed the door open and came in.

"Don't move, Jack," was the visitor's greeting, "you look too comfortable."

"Don't interrupt me for half a minute," was the inhospitable rejoinder. "You'll find tobacco about somewhere."

The speaker kept his eyes on a page of manuscript, which he was perusing with eagerness. In a few minutes he threw it down, and jumping up, shook hands heartily with his visitor.

"Same old game?" enquired Welby.

"Yes; but I've nearly mastered it, and it's about time; we've a rehearsal to-morrow at twelve."

"Shall I hear you go through it?"

"Thanks, there is one scene I'm rather afraid of; I know the words right enough, but it's a very different thing to say them when you're cutting about the stage with a lot of furniture to tumble over, and two or three people about who don't know what

you are going to do, and get in your way. There you are, I'm going to start from the tenth line. Give me my cue."

Welby took the manuscript and read: "'Loved each other from childhood.' Who says that?"

"I do, to Digby, my rival," explained Charlton. "He leans towards me and whispers, 'But are you sure she loves you still? Look at that!'" He hands me a letter, from which I learn that she has been deceiving me."

"I see," remarked Welby, tranquilly reading the next cue: "'Until you die.'"

Charlton gave, with energy, the next speech, in which he had to bewail the crushing of his hopes, the death of his aspirations, and to declare his irrevocable intention of obtaining revenge on the villain who had supplanted him in the affections of the girl he loved. Welby listened attentively, checking him from the manuscript. When he had finished Welby remarked: "Yes, you know that all right, but are you going to say it like that?"

"I don't know," replied the young actor disconsolately; "how on earth ought I to say it?"

"It strikes me that when a fellow hears that the girl he loves has thrown him over for another man, he should show his emotion in his countenance to some extent."

"Don't I?" demanded Charlton, a trifle sharply.

"You show emotion enough, but it's the wrong sort. I thought you had a violent cramp, and were trying to ease it by contortions. Now, my dear boy, you know people don't behave like that in real life; a man restrains himself even in the crises of his existence."

"Nonsense!" returned Charlton; "how can you show the difference between an ordinary event and a crisis, except by gesture and voice?"

"You ought to be true to nature," persisted his critic.

"That's all very well, but how can I be? It's my one desire to act as people do in real life, but how can I tell how a man would behave who learnt he had been jilted? For the matter of that I don't believe you know either."

"I can't say I do from experience," assented Welby, "but if I had to study a part—which thank goodness I haven't—I'd manage somehow to know how the thing was really done. Though it's true the public won't know if you're right or wrong."

"Yes, they will," interrupted Charlton eagerly; "all the parts I've studied from life have been successes. My only failures have been in situations where I had to rely on my imagination. Oh, if I could only see a fellow thrown over by a girl, I would make the whole theatre rise at me."

Welby puffed a big cloud out of his thick-stemmed briar.

"In that case, my dear boy, your duty is clear. Make love to some girl who is engaged; with your alluring manners you are bound to succeed; then study the poor fellow who is thrown over."

"Don't be a fool," retorted Charlton.

Welby laughed. "'Pon my word I don't see how you're going to manage it unless you do that. I almost wish I were engaged, so that you might have a chance of cutting me out. By-the-bye, have you heard that Brown has become engaged to Miss Harding?"

"No; has he?" exclaimed Charlton. "I thought that Figgis was the favoured individual."

"So did most people, but it seems they were wrong. I know Brown himself used to fancy that Miss Harding would never have him, till he had shot his rival or got him married to some one else."

"He's coming here to-night," said Charlton, rising and pulling aside the curtains. "What an atrocious evening! I scarcely expect he'll care about turning out in such wretched weather."

Welby also rose and stretched himself.

"Rum chap, that Brown," he remarked, as he knocked out the ashes of his pipe. "Not a favourite of mine. You mustn't mind my running down a guest of yours—he isn't one yet, though."

"Oh, I don't care two straws about him," replied Charlton; "he seems to have an idea that the whole fun of existence depends on the number of practical jokes he can play off on fellows—jokes of the good old type, like putting a jug of water on the top of a door to fall on your head when you come into his room. He would have made his fortune fifty years ago as a writer of broad farces."

"Has he ever played any tricks on you?" asked Welby, laughing.

"Yes; only two nights ago he asked me to his rooms. I knocked at the door of his sitting-room, and, getting no reply, walked in. The place was empty, so, fancying he must be out for five minutes, I walked in, took a cigar from his box, and

sat down in his big armchair. Half-a-minute afterwards, my cigar disappeared suddenly. Of course he had been hiding behind the chair, but you won't believe what a turn it gave me. I jumped up as if I had been shot, and he laughed till I hoped he was going to have a fit. That's his idea of a joke. I should like to let him see one from the other side."

Welby laughed in a very unsympathetic way, and Charlton couldn't help joining.

"He'll sober down now he's got engaged," remarked the former.

"Let's hope so, or his wife will have a strange sort of existence. Look here, he'll be here in five minutes if he's coming at all; just let me run through that scene again."

Welby complied after various protestations, hoping, he remarked, that the public would derive more enjoyment from the performance than he was obtaining from the rehearsal. But in the middle of the scene he suddenly threw the papers down, exclaiming:

"I have it, my boy; you shall have the scene in real life before you're many minutes older."

"How?"

"Through Brown. You tell him that Figgis has cut him out."

"But he knows that he hasn't."

"No, he doesn't. Listen. I happen to know that Miss Harding is going to-morrow to visit some friends at Liverpool; now it is at Liverpool that Figgis lives."

"Yes, I know."

"Well, Brown hasn't been to see his fiancée to-day, because I met him this morning, and he told me he was going to Woolwich for the day. What you must do is this. Give him to understand that you have heard that Miss Harding at the Days' dance two nights ago was seen in the arms of Figgis, and was heard to promise that she would go down to Liverpool a day earlier than arranged, so as to be able to meet him."

"Yes, but, you know, all this is drawing rather too much on one's imagination."

"It's in a good cause; you will be able to study his conduct. Besides, it's only a joke, and one of his own played back on him. Of course, we will disabuse him in a minute or so, when you've had time to see how he acts. By Jove, here he comes!"

"Mind you back me up," said Charlton hurriedly.

"All right; be careful to observe him

closely. You'll electrify London if you can reproduce the scene afterwards."

There was no time to make further arrangements, for Brown's knock was heard at the door and a moment after he entered.

"Hullo, you fellows!" he cried, "here's a sweet night to ask a man out in. It's raining cats and dogs."

"Very sorry," said Charlton, "but we haven't the superintendence of the weather, or we would have managed it better for you. Take off your coat and sit down."

"Thanks," said Brown, throwing himself into a chair without taking off his coat. Bang! went something with a loud report which made the others start.

"Don't be alarmed," said Brown, laughing hugely; "it isn't dynamite; it's only this." He pulled out the remains of a paper bag that he had blown out and concealed under his coat. "By Jove! how you fellows did start," and he went off into another fit of laughter.

Welby looked at Charlton and gave an expressive look, which was meant to convey that they would be even with him before long.

However, they were careful not to betray their intentions, and Charlton hastened to make his fresh visitor comfortable. They began talking on indifferent subjects till the conversation gradually veered round to Brown's recent engagement.

"Yes," remarked that gentleman, "I'm done for at last. The days of my liberty are over; the lark is imprisoned in its cage, content with its lump of sugar, instead of soaring over the fields, seeking its prey from the hedges."

"That's not bad," remarked Welby, "though a little mixed. You must look upon yourself as a sort of conquering hero."

"Well, yes, to some extent," acquiesced Brown tranquilly. "I can't say I thought she would have me till the very moment came; I'm not one of your handsome men with Greek profile and all that sort of thing. I suppose it is my intellectual powers that carry weight."

"Figgis has a Greek profile," remarked Welby casually.

"Figgis!" exclaimed Brown contemptuously; "I could be angry with that fellow if I were not able to pity him. Poor old Figgis, he would give something to be in my shoes."

Here Charlton and Welby looked at each other, and somewhat ostentatiously heaved

a sigh. Brown heard it and turned round sharply.

"What are you groaning like that for?" he enquired.

"Ask Welby," said Charlton.

"Ask Charlton," said Welby.

"I ask both of you," exclaimed Brown.

However, neither of them answered for a minute or two, but puffed away in silence. Then Welby remarked:

"Miss Harding is going to visit some people at Liverpool, is she not?"

"Yes; what of it?"

"That's where Figgis lives, isn't it?"

"Yes, confound him! He met her there first. She goes down to-morrow, and I run down next day."

"Have you seen her to-day?" asked Charlton.

"No, I've been to Woolwich; besides, she's spending the day at Bayswater."

Another sigh from both of the conspirators. This was more than Brown could stand.

"Look here, you pair of mysterious beings," he said, rising and putting on his hat, "if you don't tell me what all this sighing and mystic signalling mean, I declare I'll go straight home and leave you to heave sighs at each other."

"Now for it!" whispered Welby, whilst Charlton put on his most sympathetic look and began:

"You know, my dear Brown, you are insisting on our telling you, so don't blame us afterwards."

"Fire away!" was his reply.

Thus encouraged, Charlton repeated the story agreed on, Welby every now and then putting in an explanatory word.

"Watch him closely," whispered the latter to the actor.

The crisis came. Charlton explained to Brown how Miss Harding had deceived him, observing narrowly his movements.

There was little to observe. Almost before he had told his story, Brown leapt for the door, leaving his coat behind him. Before the others knew what was happening, he was downstairs and out of sight.

The two friends looked at each other in dismay.

"Here's a mess we're in!" said Charlton. "What shall we do?"

"The question is, what will he do?" returned Welby. "We've no time to lose; we must follow him. Quick!"

Charlton pulled on his boots, seized his hat and coat, and they ran down the stairs together. Not a soul was in sight, the

little street was deserted, but in the distance they heard the sound of the wheels of a cab rapidly becoming fainter and fainter.

"This is getting past a joke," said Welby ruefully.

"It's your fault, at any rate," retorted Charlton; "if you hadn't suggested it I should never have thought of it."

"It's no use disputing whose fault it is; the question is, How can we remedy it? What do you propose?"

"Let's find a cab first; we can talk over what we shall do when we have found one."

"Come along then," assented Welby. "What a beast of a night it is; I shall catch my death of cold."

"Serve you right," growled his companion, turning up the collar of his coat. "We sha'n't get a crawler, I'm afraid, till we reach the Strand. We'd better go to the stand."

"What do you mean to do then?"

"One of us had better drive to Brown's rooms and see if he can find him there; the other must go to Miss Harding's house on the chance of his having gone there."

"And suppose we find him at neither?" asked Welby.

"Then we must go to Liverpool, I suppose, unless we have the good luck to catch him at the station."

Welby gave a whistle. He had not expected to be let in for a journey to the north by the night express.

"Let's see, Liverpool is on the North-Western line, isn't it?"

"Yes; Euston is the station."

"All right, I'll meet you there as soon as I can. You drive to Miss Harding's——"

"No," interrupted Charlton, "you go there; you know her better than I do."

"I don't think I do."

"You've always said so till now," protested Charlton.

"But I don't know her well enough to make an afternoon call at half-past ten."

"You needn't go in. Just ask the servant if Mr. Brown has been there, that's all. Here's the stand, and, thank Heaven! a couple of cabs."

"Four-wheelers!" remarked Welby ruefully.

"We must make them do. Now, in you get; be at Euston as soon as you can in any case, and I'll do the same."

The anticipations of the ride were far from pleasant. The cabs looked wet and musty, the horses worn-out and miserable,

whilst the drivers had evidently been trying to keep the wet out by copious potations. But there was no help for it, so Welby got into one and Charlton into the other, both regretting the cosy room they had so recently left.

CHAPTER II.

It seemed an age to Charlton before he drew up at Brown's chambers. There was no light to be seen in his window, which augured ill. Enquiry of the housekeeper elicited the information that "Mr. Brown had come home in a sorter hurry, and scarcely stayed a minute, and then told her he was going to Liverpool, and that he wouldn't want breakfast in the morning."

This confirmed Charlton's worst fears; his only hope now was to reach the station in time to stop him. He learnt that not more than five or six minutes had elapsed since Brown's departure, so there was still a chance. As he drove on he comforted himself by thinking that trains didn't run very often at that time of night, and that in all probability there would not be one due to start just as Brown reached the station, in that case he would be obliged to wait there, and the chances were in favour of his (Charlton's) arrival in time. This hope was sufficient to render him unconscious of the dampness of the cushions on which he was sitting and to the fact that he was by no means equipped for spending a night away from home.

Euston at last! He jumped out of his crazy vehicle, gave the cabman double his fare because he could not wait to obtain change, and rushed on to the platform. It was deserted; he returned to the waiting-rooms and booking-office; some dozen people were about, but no Brown. Even Welby had not yet appeared; Charlton was alone.

"When did the last train start for Liverpool?" he asked the first official he met.

With provoking slowness the man replied: "About an hour and thirty-five minutes ago, sir."

"You're quite sure?"

"Yes, sir." The question touched his official pride, and he turned away disgusted.

What was the next thing to be done? It was clear Brown had not yet started for Liverpool. There was still the hope that Welby had found the missing man at Miss Harding's. Until one or the other turned up he must wait at the station.

To satisfy his mind he found out the time of the next train to Liverpool; one

started in about three-quarters of an hour.

"Oh, confound it all!" he muttered to himself, "how am I to stand three-quarters of an hour in this wretched place? Just long enough to be a nuisance, just too short to let one go anywhere first. One good thing, I must see Brown or Welby soon."

However, this did not seem so decided a necessity at the end of a quarter of an hour, for neither of them came. Charlton was getting more and more anxious. He looked at the clock, but it seemed to have stopped. His own watch made no more progress. He had never so acutely felt the truth of the simile of the leaden feet of time. At last, when it was nearly twelve, a cab rumbled up to the entrance, but, alas! it did not contain Brown, as for a moment he had hoped; instead there stumbled out the miserable Welby, wet, muddy, and in a bad temper.

"Have you found him?" enquired Charlton eagerly.

"No, you can see that, can't you?"

"You've been to the house?"

"Yes, I wish I hadn't; this fool of a cabman took me to the wrong street and I had to get on the box and help drive, he was as drunk as a lord. This is a nice sort of evening to spend. What are you going to do now?"

"We must go to Liverpool and find out if he's gone to the house where Miss Harding is going to-morrow; if he isn't there we must go to Figgis's place."

"When's the next train?"

"In six minutes—no, five."

"Well, but where's Brown?" ejaculated Welby. "He can't have gone without our seeing him, I suppose?"

Charlton gave an inarticulate gasp and seized a porter going by. "Porter, doesn't the Midland line go to Liverpool?"

"Yes, sir, but this is the best service."

"We're done!" cried Charlton with despair in his look; "whilst we have been waiting here he has started from St. Pancras. We are a couple of born fools!"

"Where's a time-table?" exclaimed Welby, rushing to the office. In a few seconds they found that their fate was almost worse than they had thought. In two minutes from that very moment the Liverpool train from St. Pancras would be moving out of the station.

"This settles it," said Welby in the tone of resigned despair; "we have had about as bad a run of ill-luck as we could well have imagined."

"There's nothing for it but to follow him," said Charlton. "We'd better take our tickets, we haven't a minute to spare."

They bought their return tickets and took their seats in a smoking-carriage. It did not seem long now before they were off. There was no one else in the compartment; the lamp burnt dim, the rain pelted against the windows; looking out into the darkness all they could see was the reflection of their uninviting resting-place.

They did not talk for the first few miles. When they had passed Willesden, however, Charlton threw himself back in the corner and said:

"As we are here, old man, we may as well be as comfortable as we can. Aren't you going to smoke?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Can you let me have a weed?" asked Charlton; "we came away in such a hurry I forgot to put any in my pocket."

Welby dived into his coat-tails but drew back his hand with a smothered groan.

"I've left my case and pouch at your rooms!"

This was a facer; to endure a long night journey without smoking was a terrible thing to anticipate. Welby threw himself back in his corner with a growl.

"Of all the wild-goose chases I ever took part in, this is the wildest," he said.

"It's an awful nuisance, I own," assented Charlton, "but it can't be helped. Just fancy, my dear fellow, what will happen if we don't get hold of him. There will be a scene between him and Miss Harding; he may try and smash Figgis or get smashed himself; there will be a general hullabaloo amongst all their friends; and whatever happens we may be pretty sure that we shall never be forgiven by any of the people concerned. Hang it, man! what would Miss Harding think of us? I should never have the face to see her again."

"She wouldn't mind that much," was Welby's surly rejoinder. "At any rate, I don't much see the good of rattling down to Heaven knows where at this time of night. What do you suppose Brown will do when he gets to Liverpool? 'Twill be too late for him to call where Miss Harding is supposed to be staying."

"He may go on to see Figgis," suggested Charlton.

"I suppose you will be for following him there?"

"I think that will be the wisest thing."

"Very well. I only hope it will be finer weather in Liverpool than it is here, or else that it will be so fearful that even Brown's jealousy will be damped, and he will postpone his visit till the morning."

"I hope he will, but there's no telling what a fellow like Brown will do. He's capable of routing Figgis out of bed and making him fight it out on the spot."

"By-the-bye," said Welby, "where does Figgis live?"

"I don't know," replied Charlton; "I've never been so far north as Liverpool in my life. Don't you know?"

"I?" exclaimed Welby; "I haven't the ghost of an idea."

They looked at each other in dismay.

"Things look bluer than ever," said Charlton. "We shall have to enquire."

"Enquire!" sneered Welby.

"There must be a Liverpool directory," suggested Charlton.

"Perhaps; but he will have called long before we've discovered which Figgis our man is out of the four or five or dozen in the directory. Who are the people with whom Miss Harding is going to stay?"

"Fletcher is the name, I think," said Charlton, "but I haven't an idea of the address. Don't tell me you don't know!"

"I won't tell you if you wish me not to, but all the same I don't know."

Charlton looked more blankly at him than before.

"Why, I thought you were so intimate with the Hardings that you knew all about their friends," he said.

"I don't know the addresses of all the people they know in the country," retorted Welby. "When you said so decidedly that we must call at Figgis's and on the people Miss Harding was going to stay with, I naturally concluded you knew where they lived."

The conversation was assuming a re-criminatory tone. Charlton did not reply to the last speech, but pulled his hat over his eyes and pretended to go to sleep. Welby did the same, and they kept in their respective corners for more than an hour without saying a word.

"I say, Charlton," said Welby suddenly.

"Well?"

"Were you asleep?"

"Oh no; fire away!"

"What had we better do?"

"Go straight back to town, and let the wretched tangle straighten itself as best it can."

"That's my view. This was my first practical joke and it shall be the last."

"We shall only be quits with the fellow after all," said Charlton; "all this wretched journey must count as some sort of set-off to what he has gone through."

"I say, my boy," remarked Welby, with a twinkle of mischief in his eye, "did you get many ideas of the way to act that scene?"

"Oh, the scene——" but he burst out laughing in spite of himself, the remembrance was too comical. "In the piece I have a long scene on the stage after the announcement," he continued, "and that fellow Brown never stayed an instant; 'twas one wild leap for the door and that was all. That may be the way they do it in real life, but if so the author of the play isn't aware of it. Oh, the whole business is a most awful fraud."

Good-humour was, for a time, restored by the recollection of the evening's incidents, but the influence of the hour and surroundings were too powerful; before long they both sank into their former mental condition. Neither of them could sleep; till now they had not tried much, and now that they did try they could not manage it. So they sat and shivered as the train shot swiftly along through the pelting rain, the half-hours dragging wearily along.

"Well, we are a couple of fools," was the first remark made. It came from Welby.

"I dare say we are," replied Charlton, "but what is the latest proof of it?"

"We never looked in the time-table to see whether our train or the Midland one reaches Liverpool first. If ours does, all we have to do is to meet the other, and stop him as he gets out."

"By Jove! there's a slender thread of hope yet. We must ask the guard next time we stop. He may know which arrives first."

"Yes; but how far is it from one station to the other?"

"I haven't an idea; but a cab ought to do it in very little time."

The new hope thoroughly woke them up, and they awaited with eagerness the next opportunity of speaking to the guard. Directly the train stopped Charlton jumped out, and rushed along the platform.

"Does this train or the Midland reach Liverpool first?" he demanded eagerly.

"Midland, sir, five minutes before we do."

Charlton gave a groan of despair.

"It may be late though, sir," added the guard, seeing his disappointment; "them Midland trains often are."

Charlton knew by instinct that this was a libel, merely uttered to calm him, and by way of a thrust at the rival company.

"What time are we due?" he asked.

"Six ten, sir, and we shall be there to the minute."

This, at all events, was comforting, and with this crumb of consolation Charlton tried to be content. But even that was denied him, for, as he roamed along the platform in search of his compartment, he heard an angry voice call out: "Are we going to stop here all night, guard? We're thirteen minutes late already."

Welby saw by his companion's face that the news was not encouraging. There was nothing for it now but to wait, a most aggravating method of passing time. They were tired of talking, both of them were very sleepy, and, as a consequence, considerably out of temper. Charlton was wondering how on earth he was to get back in time for rehearsal; a subject of wonder that lasted him some time, for it was impossible to find a solution of the difficulty. Welby sat in his corner in silence, except when he muttered something to himself that would have been as well left unspoken.

The lights of Liverpool appeared at last. The two unwilling travellers shook themselves thoroughly awake, and gazed into the misty distance.

"One good thing," said Charlton, "we haven't any luggage to bother about."

"I wish to goodness I had," retorted Welby; "I don't at all relish a night out without my bag."

"We had better plan our action," suggested Charlton; "what shall we do directly we arrive?"

"I don't much care. I've reached the state of absolute indifference to everything."

"Oh, nonsense! now we've come so far we must do what we can. We had better take a cab to the Midland station; if we meet Brown's train it's all right, if we don't we will go to the Midland Hotel—I suppose there is one—and see if he's there."

"And supposing he isn't?" asked Welby.

"Then we are at the end of our resources."

"I am glad of that, because I mean to go to bed and get a good night's rest, whatever happens. I feel as if I could sleep for a week."

The minutes seemed to creep on; appa-

rently the train had caught up some of its lost time, for it was now only five minutes past six and they seemed to be in the town. However, the very last part of a journey is generally the slowest, and, as they jumped on to the platform, they noticed that the clock pointed to thirteen minutes past the hour. To seize the first cab, and leap into it, was the work of a second; then there was nothing for it but again to wait.

"I hope to goodness his train is late," said Charlton feverishly.

"Can't hear what you say," shouted Welby, "this cab makes such a row."

"Never mind," shouted back Charlton.

In less time than they anticipated they reached the Midland station. "You pay him," cried Charlton, jumping out before the cab stopped, and rushing down the platform. Welby gave the man a couple of coins without waiting to see if they were sovereigns or shillings, and then ran in pursuit of his companion.

"We're in time," shouted the latter as he approached, "there's been a stoppage on the line."

"That's all right," ejaculated Welby. "How long before the train will be in?"

This necessitated further enquiries. The result was not so gratifying as they could have wished. The train could not possibly arrive for half an hour.

"Half an hour!" exclaimed Welby; "there will be nothing of me left in half an hour. Look here, Charlton, I resign. I'm going to bed."

"Nonsense! if you're so sleepy as that take a nap in the waiting-room, and I'll call you when the train is coming. One of us isn't enough to check everybody; he might slip by without being seen."

"All right; don't forget to wake me." Welby stumbled away, and in two minutes was fast asleep with his head on the table.

The next half-hour was the slowest Charlton had ever spent. It passed at last though, and a porter warned him that in two minutes the train would arrive. He hurriedly woke up Welby, who was in a worse temper than ever at being disturbed, and they took up their positions to check the passengers as they descended.

Five minutes afterwards they might have been seen walking towards the hotel with a look of absolute disgust on their countenances. No Brown was with them, their last hope had failed; they had done all they could, and must rest as satisfied as they were able. They had come two hundred

miles from home to a town where they were absolute strangers; they had missed their night's rest and thoroughly knocked themselves up, and all for nothing. "It was enough to make a man shoot himself," as Welby remarked before tumbling into bed.

Charlton sat up for a few minutes to scribble a couple of telegrams to Brown—one addressed to his rooms, the other to the care of Miss Harding. He explained that the whole affair was a joke, and asked him to call in the evening.

The rehearsal was begun before Charlton left Liverpool; his absence necessitated a further telegram to the stage-manager. The two friends reached town again after night had fallen, feeling as "sold" and miserable as they well could. They drove to Charlton's chambers, and the first thing they noticed was a note on the table. It ran as follows:

"DEAR CHARLTON,—Very sorry to have left you so unceremoniously last night. I went home, intending to go on to Liverpool, but it struck me on my way to Euston that possibly you might have been joking, so I drove to Miss Harding's to see if she had gone to Liverpool or not, arriving at the house two minutes after Welby called. I have annexed a dozen of your 'Henry Clays' to repay me for the cost of cab-fare. I won't charge you for loss of time. Thanks for your telegram; I will look in to-night and have a chat. Affectionate regards to Welby.—Yours,
 REX BROWN."

"Sweet letter," said Welby. "Do you think he will come to-night?"

"I don't know, but I know I shall be out."

"Perhaps 'twould be wise. By-the-bye, I think you had better act conventionally in future, and not try any more experimental studies from the life. Don't you agree with me?"

Charlton emphatically did.

A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY.

By ANNIE THOMAS (MRS. PENDER CUDLIP).

THE dark days were over. Every field and wood-path round about Railham was a primrose one. The crops, both in field and garden, promised a splendid harvest. Altogether Railham was at its best and brightest when young Dr. Dacre's two sisters came to see him for the first time in his "new home."

They still spoke of it as that, though he had been settled at Railham for two years, for up to that time he had lived at home in the family nest, and had been in practice with his father up in the north of England. But on the father's death the property had to be divided for the good of the family, and Richard Dacres had thought it better to sell the practice, and by this means to secure the comfort and incomes of his maiden sisters, and to trust to his own talents to make one for himself elsewhere.

An opening offered at Railham—a thriving little market-town in Norfolk—and he put himself into the opening promptly, and filled it to the entire satisfaction of himself and his patients.

For two years his sisters had talked at frequent intervals of coming to see him. But the length of the journey, and the expense, to say nothing of their disinclination to move from the place they knew by heart, had stood in the way hitherto. But now at last they had really come to visit their brother in his own house.

His house was a red-brick one, standing back from the street, with a paved court surrounded by narrow beds of old-fashioned shrubs and flowers, and protected from straying footsteps of man or beast by high iron railings in front of it. It had steep steps leading to its front door, and high narrow windows, and was altogether very much like dozens of houses that you may see in any old English market-town.

His household consisted of a working housekeeper, a "handy girl," as the housekeeper was good enough to call her, and a groom. There was about the place a serene atmosphere of peace and content—an air of "going on" as it was, that made the Miss Dacres hope that their brother was going to follow their example, and not burden himself with a wife and large family as their eldest brother had done.

Indeed, they were so pleased with Railham and its friendly, hospitable inhabitants, so happy to be again under the same roof-tree with Dick, that they soon made a proposition, to which he assented heartily, little thinking of the coil of difficulties in which it would involve him by-and-by.

What they proposed was this. That they should give up their present abode in the faraway Northumbrian village; bring their household gods to Railham; and settle down with their brother in the house in the High Street on their united incomes.

The additional servant whom they would provide and pay—a trim and tidy parlour-maid—was the one bit of living furniture that was needed in the doctor's establishment. For the working housekeeper had her hands fully occupied by culinary duties, and the "handy girl," being of an unobtrusive and timid temperament, generally retired to the garret or the washhouse if the surgery-bell was rung with a force and decision that betokened any other than a parish patient.

Moreover, their good old-fashioned furniture, which belonged to a period when massiveness and solidity were in vogue, would fill up the empty rooms and give that air of its occupants being old residents in their home which the Miss Dacres so much esteemed.

Accordingly, as their brother heartily agreed to it, the proposition was speedily carried into effect. It was the time of the earliest spring when the Miss Dacres first came to Railham as guests. It was the time of roses when they journeyed thither the second time to settle down with Dick.

They were both older than the doctor. Indeed, they looked upon him as a boy still, though he was a man of thirty. The elder of the two sisters was at least fifteen and the younger seven or eight years his senior. But they were bright, energetic, strong, healthy, happy-hearted women, with no aggravating "little ways" about them, and Dick Dacre soon found himself surrounded by an undefinable atmosphere of home comfort, to which he had for so long been a stranger.

It was a market-day in Railham, and market-day was always rather an exciting and eventful day for the Miss Dacres. In the first place, everyone from all the region round drove into Railham on that day, for the volunteer band played, and one was sure of meeting everyone else, and altogether it was a gala-day. The great county ladies would come in, and drive about to the stationer's, and the milliner's, and the music-shop, and confectioner's, and chat and laugh with one another in open carriages at shop-doors, or standing by the counters.

The Miss Dacres knew everybody by sight, and many they knew to speak to. Their house was on the sunny side of the street. Their shady, flower-scented drawing-room, with its litter of pretty needle-work, was a charming place for afternoon tea! So it had come to be an established custom with many of those who were

Dick's patients, to finish up their day in Railham before their drive home with a "cup of tea and a chat with the Dacres."

The tea was in full progress, one afternoon, and there was to be heard that sound of ceaseless babble and laughter which indicates satisfaction with both speakers and audience.

The Miss Dacres were enjoying their little feast as usual. They were quite outside any local jealousies, and though they were taken freely into the midst of this society, there still hung about them that subtle charm of being foreign elements, and perfectly independent, which is duly valued by a circle that has grown to be a little monotonous to itself.

The only regret the two sisters felt on these pleasant social afternoons, was that Dick was invariably too much engaged ever to put in an appearance in the drawing-room. For the Miss Dacres took quite an amiable pride in having the room full of "good" people, and of knowing that "all the town could see" the number of carriages, and victorias, and Norfolk-carts that waited about outside their door.

"All this is very good for Dick, it gets him talked about," the affectionate sisters would say in congratulatory tones when their visitors departed; "besides, he'll be thought quite a family man now we are living with him, and people see how homelike and domesticated it all looks."

This they would say to each other approvingly, but if any rash acquaintance chanced to suggest that it would be a good thing for young Dr. Dacre if he took a wife, and became a family man in reality, the suggestion was scouted by the sisters as being utterly unworthy of the object, and derogatory to their care of him.

It happened on this particular market-day that Dr. Dacre broke through his rule of avoidance of his sisters' afternoon tea-party, and came in, greatly to their delight and surprise, at quite an early stage of the entertainment.

Just for a moment Miss Dacre had a qualm! She could not help wishing either that Mrs. Gower had not brought her pretty young daughter Nina with her this day, or that Dick had deferred coming in until the Gowers had departed.

Not but what the Gowers were unexceptionable people, quite "good people" by birth, station, and income. But Nina would never do for the wife of a struggling, rising young professional man, Miss Dacre assured herself, and in the same flush of

thought almost, she reflected that "Dick was not a marrying man, no need to fear for him."

Pretty Nina Gower had a very slight acquaintance with Dr. Dacre, though she often came with her mother to have a chat "with those nice old maids," his sisters. Nina was in the first flush of her youth and beauty, in the first ecstasy of delight at the success that youth and beauty commanded. She had only "come out" the previous winter, but she had come out royally!

Her first recognised appearance in public had been at a grand ball, given in honour of Royalty. Nina had waltzed with princes at this ball, and ever since had been much flattered, followed, courted, bored, by admiration, and remark, and attention. But she was a sensible girl, and kept her head wonderfully. Only, it is not astonishing that she should not take the vivid interest in Dr. Dacre which his sisters feared she might.

But presently the habit of her sex made her a little more observant of the only man present. She had given him a cool little bow when he came near her in his own drawing-room, and he had begun talking to her mother as indifferently as if she (Nina) were a thousand miles away. She was not weak, or vain, or exacting, or selfish, but she had very recently waltzed with princes, and they had thought her worth looking at and talking to!

She was a very pretty girl, and a distinguished-looking girl, which was even better than the prettiness. Her golden-brown hair was long and immensely thick. Her oval face was of that creamy tint which lights up into lily-leaf fairness by artificial light; her eyes were as blue as the Germander speedwell; and her figure and carriage were graceful as could be desired. On the whole, it was rather odd that Dr. Dacre should stand within a couple of yards of her, for the first time in his life, for fifteen or twenty minutes without once looking at her.

He was talking seriously and earnestly enough to her mother, so that Nina could venture a glance in his direction without any fear of the glance being marked by him, and attributed to undue interest. What a nice, firm, dark, earnest, thoughtful, observant face he had, to be sure! It made her feel quite sympathetic with his unknown subject, and a little regretful about her cool little bow. Something of these feelings manifested themselves in

her expression, and Miss Dacre, catching sight of this, in an instant felt quite alarmed.

"My dear Miss Gower, you are quite tired; you're too much in the sun, I'm sure. The spring afternoon sun is so very trying; I suppose the fact is, we're not accustomed to heat and brightness after the long winter days. Come over here and look at my mantelpiece and fire-place curtains for the summer."

So she gabbled away, full of good intentions, and managed to draw Nina out of Dr. Dacre's vicinity before he had time to bestow a look or thought upon her.

He was called out to the surgery a minute after this, and before he came back Mrs. Gower had taken her daughter away. Nina was the charioteer, driving a perfect pair of small bay cobs in a way that called forth a good deal of admiring remark as they passed through Railham on their way to their own place, Blindon Hall.

"What a very sensible, good, kind young man Dr. Dacre seems to be," Mrs. Gower began; "he was telling me of an accident that happened only this afternoon, and I could tell from the way he spoke that his heart is quite in his work."

"I wanted to hear what he was saying," Nina confessed, and then added with a smile: "but his sister harpooned me, and carried me off to look at some crewel-work."

"It really is very sad; a circus came in to the town this morning, and one of the young women riders was practising a jump she was to take to-night when the horse slipped, and came down with such violence that she was shot yards over its head. She hadn't recovered consciousness when he came home, and the people she's travelling with seem very hard about it. They say she's only just joined their company. They know nothing about her, and can't be troubled to do much for her. Dr. Dacre came home to ask his sisters to let her be taken to their house; he says he can attend to her better there, and she can have proper nursing and food."

Nina checked her cobs as soon as her mother ceased speaking.

"How good of him! I could see he was generous, and manly, and good all the time he was speaking to you. Let us go and see if we can help him—I mean help the poor girl. His sisters won't like having her taken there, I'm sure; they'll think of the trouble she may be in the future—not, like him, of the good they may do

in the present. Where is she, mother? Do let us go."

Mrs. Gower rarely refused a request made by her daughter. Accordingly, now she mentioned the name of the hotel to which the poor injured circus-rider had been carried, and thither with all speed Miss Gower drove.

Their enquiries for the young person who had met with an accident were answered by the landlady of Quibbs's Hotel herself.

"Yes; the case has been brought here, Mrs. Gower—brought here by Dr. Dacre's request. If it hadn't been Dr. Dacre's case, I don't think she'd have been taken in. Strollers are not the class of customers Quibbs's likes to have."

"We've come to see if we can help Dr. — help the poor girl," Nina said, giving the reins to the groom, and jumping out of the carriage as she spoke. Then, with fine obliviousness of the presence of the landlady, she went on: "Fancy the heartlessness of it, mother, doubting whether they'd have taken her in, if Dr. Dacre hadn't sent her here. If she can be moved we'll take her to Blindon, won't we, and I'll nurse her?"

"Is Dr. Dacre here now?" Mrs. Gower asked, disregarding her daughter's last impetuous proposition.

"No, ma'am, he's not come back yet; he went to fetch his sisters, I think. The poor thing might be a lady by the fuss that's being made about her," the landlady said, thinking resentfully of Nina's remark anent the heartlessness of Quibbs's.

"Perhaps she is suffering quite as much as a lady could," Miss Gower said impatiently; "do let us see her, mother," and then, as the landlady constrained her indignant spirit to pioneer them upstairs to where the maimed circus-rider was lying, Nina whispered: "If she can be moved we'll have her at Blindon, won't we? You can see that she will only have grudging attention here."

"Wait, darling," Mrs. Gower murmured, for experience had taught her that it was not always wise to allow herself to be hurried into action by her daughter.

Then the bedroom door was opened, and they found themselves in the room with the object of their visit.

Two women belonging to the "troupe" were standing by the bed, and were waiting anxiously for the doctor's verdict.

They stepped back as the ladies came into the room, and Nina saw at once

that, anxious as they were, they were not sympathetic.

"How is she?—conscious yet?" Mrs. Gower asked tenderly, for at the first glimpse of the fair face on the pillow, her womanly heart yearned towards the sufferer.

"Only partial," the elder of the two women replied curtly. Then she added: "A rare bad job this, to be sure; she was the prettiest rider we'd ever had in the company, not so much for tricks, though she's quick enough at learning them, as for regular out-and-out daring riding. She'd have been a fortune to my husband, and now this has happened!"

"She may recover soon," Mrs. Gower said, while Nina hastily passed round the bed, and bent down close to the still, fair face.

It was a very lovely young face, pallid and drawn as it was now. Blood and earth, which they had not been able to wash away yet, matted a good deal of the rich chestnut hair together, but the little tendrillike curls that fell over her forehead were fine and silky as an infant's. The shape of her face was a full oval, the forehead broad and low, and well divided from the still closed eyes by brows a shade or two darker than the chestnut. Her nose was probably of the "tip-tilted" order, but this could scarcely be seen from the position of her face on the pillow. Her mouth was not small, but the upper lip was exquisitely short, and its curved lines were perfection.

No wonder that a good, kind, observant man like Dr. Dacre had taken such an interest in this patient.

Nina Gower drew her glove off, and laid her hand on the girl's forehead. At the touch the one on the bed opened her eyes, lovely dark-grey eyes, and the two looked at each other.

"Are you much hurt, can you tell me where?" Nina murmured, and the girl, in a voice that had less tremble in it than had her interrogator's, answered:

"I don't know—my head aches—what is it has happened?"

"Why you've had a nasty fall from the blue roan mare, Miss Delarue, and given us all a fine fright," the elder woman, who was the wife of the owner and manager of the company, replied, stooping forward.

"The blue roan? I thought—I thought——" She paused, and with an effort got her hand up to her head.

"Is Nell Gwynn hurt? has she cut her knees?"

"Ah! wandering still; we haven't a horse in the stud called Nell Gwynn," the manager's wife said, shaking her head solemnly, but Nina Gower had quicker intuitions.

"Nell Gwynn is your horse—your own?" she said quickly, speaking into the girl's ear so that those around should not hear her.

"She is my own," the other replied wonderingly. Then she tried to lift her head from the pillow, and fell back faint and speechless from the attempt.

"She'll never be no use to us any more—never, never," the manager's wife said impatiently, and once more Nina muttered:

"Mother darling! let us take her when she can be moved;" and as she pleaded thus Dr. Dacre came in.

He was more than surprised when he saw whose graceful form was leaning over his new patient. Never before had Nina Gower looked so lovely in his eyes as she did now. There was no cool little bow vouchsafed to him now. Nina went round to meet him, and held out her hand.

"Mother told me what had happened, and I would come; you're not vexed, are you? We may be useful really if you'll tell us how to be. She mustn't stay here, let her come to Blindon?"

He merely smiled and said, "My dear Miss Gower!" but he liked her rarely well for the aid she had proffered, and the way she had proffered it. Then he went over to his patient, and took her limp wrist in his hand, and bent down to listen to her breathing.

"Will she——" Nina had followed him to ask this half question eagerly.

"Live? Yes, I hope so—I think so," he said, looking round quickly at Miss Gower, and then the mutilated girl opened her eyes again, and stared, frightened, at the strange man's face that was bending over her.

He poured some restorative down her throat, and presently she asked in that wonderfully controlled voice of hers:

"Who are you? What is it all?" Then he told her briefly and clearly all that had happened to her since she came to Railham this morning. And the narrative evidently recalled to her mind much that had happened to her before, for the look of perplexity vanished, and in its place one of sad thoughtfulness reigned.

There was silence for a few moments when he ceased speaking, then she asked:

"Is Nell Gwynn hurt?"

"The blue roan is all right, Miss Delarue," the manager's wife answered, pressing forward, and the girl on the bed made a movement expressive of satisfaction with her lips, and a smile flew over her face.

"Is she to be moved to your house?" Mrs. Gower asked in a low voice, and when he shook his head in the negative, and then muttered something about his "sisters thinking it better that she should remain where she was," Nina pleaded again.

"Mother, mother! do make him let us take her to Blindon."

The girl on the bed heard the entreaty and understood it. With an effort she raised her head from the pillow, and fixing her eyes beseechingly on Nina, cried:

"Do you take me—yes, do, you will; won't you?"

"After that you have no appeal if she may be moved," Nina said, coming swiftly to her side. "Mother will go home and send the carriage for us, and I'll stay here with Miss Delarue till it comes."

"So be it," Dr. Dacre assented, and in his heart he was glad that his interesting patient would be under the charge of the impulsive Miss Gower, rather than with his more cautious sisters.

In due time the carriage came from Blindon, and Miss Gower had the satisfaction of seeing the journey performed with no pain and but little uneasiness to the injured girl.

Nina Gower did nothing by halves. She had brought the suffering girl with sisterly care and tenderness to her own home, and as a sister she caused the stranger to be served and treated. A room adjoining her own, and fitted up with all the luxuries her own contained, was the one apportioned to Miss Delarue, and here late on the afternoon of the day after the accident, Nina sat embroidering by her new friend's bed.

Miss Delarue was getting on well; so well that Dr. Dacre had given her permission to talk—which she would have done whether he had given his permission or not. The injuries turned out to be less terrible than had been at first supposed. One arm was broken, and one rib, and her head was a good deal cut and bruised. But she had youth, and a splendid constitution, and she was doing well.

"How nice it is to be in a house like this again, and to have linen like this on once more," she said complacently, holding up her uninjured arm, and looking with pleasure at her own white, well-shaped little

hand, protruding from a sleeve covered with embroidery and lace.

Nina looked up quickly, then threw down her work, and stood up by the side of the bed.

"Are you going to tell me?" she asked simply, taking the circus-rider's little hand in her own, and the girl clasped Miss Gower's hand warmly, and drew her nearer.

"I will tell you, and when I have told you, you will pity me, and won't send me home, I know you won't. I can tell at a glance if a person's to be trusted, and I know you are, and so is Dr. Dacre. Now for my story. My name isn't Delarue. That you guessed at once, didn't you? I wanted a name in a hurry, and I saw that stamped on a packet of envelopes, so I took it, it's the only thing that didn't belong to me that I've ever taken in my life. Was it thieving?"

"No," Nina didn't think it was.

"Well, my real name is Tierney, and my home, or what was my home once, is a dear old place in Warwickshire—Priors Dene, it's called. My father and mother both died of fever ten years ago, and then my only brother Archibald came into the property. There were only two of us, and Archie was the dearest——"

A burst of tears stopped the story here, and, for sympathy, Nina wept too. They were both crying away most contentedly when Dr. Dacre came in, and as the patient "felt he could be trusted," she continued the telling of her tale presently, when she came shining out from her tear-fall like the sun after a shower.

"Archie was the dearest brother that ever lived. He was eight or nine years older than I, and when I left school he made me quite mistress of Priors Dene, and took me everywhere with him. That's why I ride so well. I hunted three times a week in the season, from the time I left school, and before that, when papa was alive, I always had good ponies as a child, and a dear little cob as a girl. But, while I lived with Archie, I always had the best light-weight carriers that money could buy, and Nell Gwynn's the most perfect of the lot. I can't tell you about my life at Priors Dene with Archie," she went on, her voice growing hoarse with emotion; "it was too happy, too bright in every way while my brother lived. He was engaged to be married to such a dear girl, and the wedding dresses even were made, when he caught some dreadful illness on

top of a bad cold, and died before I knew he was in danger.

"Before I could hold my head up or think of anything but that I had lost my brother, papa's brother came to claim the property, and make Priors Dene his home. He isn't a bad man on the whole, but his wife, my aunt, is a wretch.

"She began preaching at me directly she came, telling me how dreadful it was that neither my father nor my brother had made any provision for me, and talking at me about hunting and Archie's extravagance till I flamed at her, and we had a quarrel and said awful things to each other. I think I said the worst things, because all I said was true.

"Will you believe it," she continued, opening her lovely grey eyes very wide, and raising herself up on her elbow in her excitement, "they said my own dear mare, Nell Gwynn, that Archie had given me, wasn't mine any more. They put their own eldest daughter on the mare—put a girl who sat like a ball in the saddle, and who looked idiotic from terror, on Nell Gwynn! And the mare has such perfect manners that she didn't do what I would have done—thrown the pretender, and kicked her to death!"

Her eyes flashed furiously as she spoke, and Dr. Dacre interposed:

"If you must dramatise your story, we cannot listen to it, Miss Tierney; you must keep quiet."

She moved her head impatiently, but continued more calmly:

"Well, Nell Gwynn didn't do what I would have done, but carried her poor, helpless, stupid burden about, till the sight maddened me. Other things maddened me too. My aunt cut off all my friends; those who were nearest and dearest to me were not admitted to Priors Dene."

There was such stifled pain and wrath in her voice as she said this, that Dr. Dacre started. His patient had stabbed him unintentionally by her passionate regret.

"I'm getting tired, and I'll tell you quickly," Miss Tierney went on. "One night we had a great row. My aunt told me that a Mr. Charles Lewis, Archie's greatest friend, was going to ride the next day with her daughter Hester, and that Hester was to ride my Nell Gwynn! She shouldn't do that, I was determined; so after dinner that day I dressed myself in my habit, and took all the bracelets and rings mamma had left me—I had no money—and went out to the stable and saddled

Nell Gwynn myself while the grooms were at supper, and rode away to a town where I knew there was a circus at the time.

"I showed them how I could ride, and I got them to move away that same night by giving them a lot of my jewellery; and I've bound myself and Nell Gwynn to stay with them for three years; only they don't know her as Nell Gwynn. I changed her name as I changed my own, and called her 'Blue Ruin' and myself 'Delarue'! That's my story, Miss Gower. Do you think I'm a very silly, hateful girl?"

"I think you must make up your mind to give up the circus and stay here with us," Nina said warmly. Then she went away to look for her mother and tell Miss Tierney's true story, in order that Mrs. Gower might be ready with the invitation which Nina was resolved should be given.

Meanwhile the doctor was alone with his patient.

"Do you think me a very silly, hateful girl?" she asked seriously. "What I did was wrong, I know; I ought to have stayed in my uncle's house, and have borne everything from my aunt, and have seen my cousin ride my mare and monopolise my——"

She paused, and he asked quietly: "Your 'household rights,' were you going to say?"

"You know very well, Dr. Dacre, that I was not going to say anything of the kind," she retorted impatiently; "but no matter. Well, I couldn't stand patiently by and see Nell Gwynn badly ridden, and my friends tricked into seeming friendliness with Hester. My life had been so free, so happy, and so successful before with dear Archie, you can't wonder that I felt the loss of other things more keenly after I had lost him."

"I should like to see everything you loved and valued restored to you."

"They never can be," she interrupted hastily, "at least, not all I loved and valued; my brother and my home are gone for ever."

"Your friends are left; you wouldn't hide yourself away from them?"

"If you mean my uncle and his perfidious wife and daughter, I'll tell you this at once—wild horses shall not drag me back to them."

"You spoke of other friends, Miss Tierney."

"He can find me if he cares to take the trouble to search and follow," she said, blushing a little, and Dr. Dacre's heart

throbbed painfully. The "friends" whom his bewitching patient lamented so deeply were all condensed into that one "he."

"I shall, with your permission, make all necessary arrangements with the manager to-day, and give him to clearly understand that your engagement must be cancelled," he said presently.

"Oh, don't! I shall forfeit the mare if you do. Nell Gwynn's the only bit of the old life that's left to me; don't let me lose the mare," she said piteously.

"I will take care of her interests as well as of yours. Nell Gwynn is at this moment in my own stable, and there she will remain till you are well enough to ride her."

She caught his hand and hugged it as a grateful child might have done, only, unfortunately for him, she was not merely a grateful child, she was a beautiful and attractive young woman.

"I can never do enough for you, Dr. Dacre. First you save my life, then you save my mare. How good you are! How I ought to love you!"

He brought his professional visit to a close soon after this, leaving his fair patient with Mrs. Gower and Nina. The daughter of the house had carried her point, and Mrs. Gower pleaded as earnestly as even Nina desired that Kate Tierney should remain with them.

"But it must all be fair and above-board, Nina," her father insisted. "I'll write to her uncle and your mother shall write to her aunt, and if her story holds water when we've heard the other side, then this shall be her home, and I'll treat her as a daughter as far as is consistent with my duty to you."

"Don't write to those people till I'm strong enough to speak for myself if they come here after me," Kate Tierney pleaded; and her plea was granted.

Meanwhile Dr. Dacre visited her daily. Visited her, he admitted to his own heart, long after there was any surgical or medical excuse for his doing so. Kate was soon sound in limb and flesh, but she remained weak and languid, and this without any physical cause that he could discover. At times she would be vivacious enough, and in her vivacious moods she was invariably grateful and tender and affectionate towards him, therefore he longed for their reappearance when they were over, for their continuance when they reappeared.

But though he longed for them and enjoyed them, and was miserable when they were superseded by periods of languor

and depression, these tender vivacious moods of Kate Tierney's were dangerous to him in the present, and might be destructive in the future. In short, he was allowing himself to love the girl of whom he knew so little—of whom he knew nothing, in short, save that she was lovely and wilful; and though he guarded his secret from others, he did not hide it from himself.

He guarded it so well from others that, though it absorbed his mind and thoughts to the exclusion of everything that was not connected with his professional duties, not even his sisters suspected it. Or, rather, they did not suspect that the "circus-rider," as they still called her, had anything to do with it, but rather feared that Dick's frequent visits to Blindon were made in the forlorn hope of winning the heiress of Blindon to be his wife.

It hurt their pride wofully to think that their brother Dick should be wasting his heart, as they considered it, on a girl like Nina, who, they decided, would only marry for love if ambition could be gratified at the same time. It never occurred to them that Nina was foolish enough to find sweet delight in cherishing the same mistake that vexed them, namely, that Dr. Dacre came to Blindon so often because she was there.

They were all blind. As the summer days rolled, and the evenings stretched themselves out, every spare hour that Dr. Dacre had on those evenings was spent by him under the verandah at Blindon, smoking with Mr. Gower, or reading and talking with the girls. And all the while Kate Tierney went on imploring them all to "wait just a little longer" before they told her people of her whereabouts.

Kate's secret was well kept. Not even to his own sisters did Dick mention that the circus-rider after whom they occasionally enquired was in reality a well-born young lady, and now the chosen friend and constant companion of Miss Gower, of Blindon. The vigilant sisters had an idea that the girl was up at Blindon hovering between the lady's-maid's sanctum and the housekeeper's room.

As for Nell Gwynn, they knew nothing about her. Their tastes were not horsey, and they never visited their brother's stables.

It was inevitable, under such circumstances, that mists of misconception should thicken on all sides. Mr. Gower began to grow not exactly displeased, and not ex-

actly alarmed, but a little perplexed on the subject of the frequency of the young doctor's visits.

"I'm delighted to see him, and I think Dacre a very good fellow; but why does he come so often?" Mr. Gower asked his wife, and she with more delicate discernment than was evinced by any of the others, replied:

"It's impossible to say with certainty, but perhaps he prizes what he has saved. Kate is very lovely, and he's not blind."

"You think it's Kate?"

"Why, surely, you don't think it's Nina?" her mother asked quickly.

"Don't you make so sure that I'm wrong and you're right, old lady," her husband said, shaking his head sagaciously. "I'm very much mistaken if Nina's not of my opinion too; and I'm afraid she doesn't regard it quite in the same light as I do. She was wonderfully willing to give up going to town this summer; what did that mean?"

"It meant that she's not a frivolous girl, and that she can well afford to wait," her mother said proudly.

"It meant that she was a great deal too well pleased to stay down here within daily reach of Dr. Dacre," Mr. Gower said, shaking his head ominously, and the mother resolved to speak to her daughter without delay.

Just before this, Kate had empowered them to write to her relatives, and the situation was made more complicated by the fact of the relatives not having yet made any sign.

Kate had also, without consulting any one, written to that friend of her late brother's, Mr. Charles Lewis, whose riding with her cousin had been the last straw which had broken down her endurance. She had written to him in an unexceptionable strain, treating him with just the shade of confidence and familiarity with which a girl who had known him well, and regarded him as her brother's friend, should treat him.

Nevertheless, as soon as her letter was posted, she regretted having written it.

"Better he should miss me for ever than that I should have put him on my own track," she told herself. Still, as she had put him on her own track, she did long to hear that he was following her up.

One day, after waiting more than a week for an answer, and no answer coming, she told Dr. Dacre what she had done.

"Well?" he said curtly when she had told him.

"Well! that's not at all an encouraging mode of receiving my communication," she laughed, and pouted. "Can't you say something more—something pretty?"

"What would you have me say, Miss Tierney?" he asked sadly.

"Oh, don't be low-spirited," she cried impatiently; "I only thought that you as a man might be able to suggest some reason for his not having written to me."

"He may not have had your letter."

"Nonsense! that's not it. Do you think—do you think he is furious because I ran away?"

"Had he the right to be?"

"Don't speak in that graveyard tone, Dr. Dacre; it isn't so solemn as all that. I assure you if Charley Lewis has forgotten me, and is on with a new love, I have it in me to——"

She hesitated, but he would not help her on by a question.

"I have it in me to follow his example," she resumed presently, and then, rather to her annoyance, Nina came in, for there was something in Dr. Dacre's manner and expression that was very soothing to lonely Kate this day.

The opportunity which Mrs. Gower professed to be seeking of speaking to her daughter came, and the mother took it, sorely against her inclination.

"Dear Nina, do you think our pretty little Kate will make up her mind to settle near us?" she began nervously.

"Oh no, mother, how should she? She's longing for the day when Mr. Charles Lewis will follow and find her, and take her back in triumph as his wife to crow over her discomfited cousin."

"Mr. Charles Lewis has had plenty of time to find her, since we wrote to her uncle and aunt."

"They mayn't have told him that they have heard from you. Kate was speaking to me about it last night, and she said they were 'capable of any meanness in order to compass their own ends and catch Charles Lewis for Hester.' Kate has firm faith in his fidelity, though he does seem to us to be rather lax in his quest of her."

"Don't you think," Mrs. Gower began hesitatingly, "that what looks to you like patience may be indifference? Has it struck you that Dr. Dacre may be consoling Kate for Mr. Lewis's defection?"

"No, it hasn't," Nina said with prompt decision, and Mrs. Gower's heart fell. Her

daughter would not speak with such certainty were she in doubt.

"Nina must think that he comes here to see her, and Nina isn't one to think of a man who isn't ready to surrender himself to her," the mother thought, and her spirits sank at the prospect of the difficulties that might be placed in Nina's path by her father.

The struggle must be made, that "one word more" must be said.

"My dear Nina, if you feel sure that he doesn't come here to see Kate Tierney, for whose sake does he come? Will you answer me that?"

"For mine!"

"Oh, Nina, your father feared——"

"No, no, mother dear; I won't listen to anything that may sound narrow and illiberal. My father will never 'fear' anything about Dr. Dacre when he comes to know him better, the feeling can't exist concerning him. Dear mother, if he satisfies me, surely all the rest of the world may be satisfied."

"I wish that accident had never happened," Mrs. Gower said fervently, but as Kate Tierney was quite recovered now, Nina Gower would not echo that fervent aspiration.

It may be questioned how she could have fallen into such an error. The answer is easy enough. Her beauty was incontestably greater than Kate's. Why should it not have won Dr. Dacre's love, especially as she desired to win it? Moreover, in his dread of betraying himself prematurely to Kate Tierney, he had fallen into the habit of addressing himself chiefly to Nina. He attributed all that was sweet and kind in Nina's manner to him, to her sympathy with the affection he felt for her fascinating friend. And so the web of misunderstanding was added to daily.

Day after day Dr. Dacre almost made up his mind to speak out to Kate. Day after day Nina told herself "he will say something to me soon." More closely than ever did he "hang about" after the daughter of the house now, for he was longing to break the ice with her first, and get some words of encouragement from her. And she, happy in her belief that she was that all to him for which his soul did pine, treated him with such sweet kindness that he fancied she had fathomed the depth of his feeling for Kate, and approved of and sympathised with it.

The long-looked-for letter from Priors Dene came at last. Mr. and Mrs. Tierney

were very grateful (they said) for the Christian care which had been bestowed on their utterly unworthy niece. They would have expressed this gratitude before, had not family affairs of great moment engrossed all their time and thoughts. When they explained to Mr. and Mrs. Gower that their eldest daughter was about to enter into a matrimonial engagement, Mr. and Mrs. Gower would understand, as parents, how completely they had been absorbed in preparing for it. They felt that they could not conscientiously condone Kate's offences against society and themselves by inviting her to their daughter's nuptials with Mr. Charles Lewis, but at the same time they wished her kind protectors to understand that they cherished no ill-will against the misguided girl, and were quite prepared to allow a handsome maintenance, namely, fifty pounds a year.

"The poor child shall never touch or want a farthing of their money," Mr. Gower said emphatically, banging his hand on the table in his vehemence; "she shall be my charge now."

Poor Mrs. Gower said nothing. She was considering how she could best break the bitter tidings of Mr. Charles Lewis's approaching marriage to Kate.

She told Nina of it first, and Nina's eyes grew wet in a moment.

"Poor darling! it will half kill her; she never dreams that he is less faithful than herself; oh, mother, I did so hope we were all going to be happy."

"You still think that she will not console herself?"

"With whom should she console herself?" Nina asked quickly.

"Once before I suggested with Dr. Dacre."

Nina laughed.

"That's too absurd; I'm afraid I'm not a female Quixote—I can't offer to surrender him to her."

Mrs. Gower sighed. She was an outsider, a looker-on. But she had watched the two narrowly of late, and—she was not love-blinded, as was her daughter.

"Who shall tell Kate about her cousin's marriage?" This was the burning question now. Presently Nina settled it.

"Dr. Dacre shall do it, mother; he knows nothing of her penchant for Mr. Charles Lewis, and therefore the information will drop quite naturally from his lips, and her pride will keep her up, she won't let him see how she feels it. Now before me she would break down, for she

has talked to me of him, and she knows I know that she loves him."

"It's a tangled skein," Mrs. Gower sighed.

When Dr. Dacre called that day at Blindon, he found himself waylaid on the terrace by Nina.

"Don't go in for a minute or two," she began with that perfectly confidential manner which was born of her firm belief in his love, and which he misinterpreted to mean the purest friendship. "Don't go in for a minute or two. I want to say something about Kate."

"I'll gladly stay with you for hours, you know that." So he would have done to hear about Kate!

She smiled and blushed happily.

"I'm going to ask you to do some very disagreeable work for me. Will you do it?"

"Anything in the world that I can do for you, I will, Miss Gower."

He meant what he said honestly. He did adore her for her goodness to Kate Tierney.

"It's just this. Father and mother have had this letter" (she handed it to him) "from her uncle and aunt to-day. Mr. Lewis is going to marry Kate's cousin; I want you to break the bad news to her."

He could not answer her, his heart throbbled too tumultuously with mingled joy and hope, and doubt and pity. So he made a feint of reading the letter attentively for a minute or two, and while he read it Nina gathered some violets, and hoped he would ask her for them.

Presently he gave the letter back to her, saying:

"It's a vulgar, heartless epistle; poor girl, how she must have suffered with those people! I will do as you ask me. Where is she now?"

"I left her in the drawing-room; it's a horrid task to impose on you, but I knew you would do it for me, and I'm a coward about hurting dear Kate myself."

"I don't think—I mean I trust she will feel that he's not worth a sigh," Dr. Dacre said with kindling eyes. But Nina shook her head, and seemed to think that Kate would be very love-lorn.

"He needn't have been in such a hurry," Nina thought, as Dr. Dacre went away on his mission. But she reflected that his haste was only caused by his impatience to get back to her, and so was satisfied.

He found Kate in the drawing-room where Nina had left her, half asleep, with

a book, as an excuse for sitting still, drooping from her hand.

At Dr. Dacre's entrance she roused herself into animation. Truth to tell, now that she was well and strong again, the days at Blindon lacked excitement and were very long. There were many minutes in every day when Kate wished herself back with the circus company. To her colleagues of the ring she had been a mystery, and her appearance on Nell Gwynn never ceased to create a sensation among them. Here at Blindon she was beginning to be accepted as quite in the order of things, and she found it dull.

Consequently she was beginning to look upon Dr. Dacre's visits as the most agreeable episodes in her daily life, and so she gave him a cordial welcome.

"You are good to come out in this heat," she began, moving a little in order to let him sit down on the sofa by her side. "Nina has been prowling in and out as if she didn't feel it, but I like to take very hot weather as it's meant to be taken, quietly and coolly; so I settled down here with a book."

"And now I've come to disturb you, Kate."

He had fallen into the habit of calling her "Kate," as all the Gowers did, and she rather liked the fraternal familiarity, and felt strongly inclined to call him "Dick" in return.

"I like being disturbed by you, do you know," she said caressingly; "though Nina's was the first face I saw after my tumble, you were my first friend here in reality. I shall never forget that."

"I wish I might look after you all the rest of my life," he said earnestly, forgetting the mission on which he had been sent.

She shook her head.

"It would be very good for me if you could, but I can't expect to stay at Blindon much longer. Some of them from home will surely hunt me out before long," she replied, misunderstanding him wilfully perhaps.

"Are you anxious for them to do so, Kate? Do you want them to find you and take you away?"

"I will never be taken away by my uncle and aunt."

When she said that he remembered what he had come to tell her about Mr. Charles Lewis and her cousin Hester.

"Your uncle and aunt are cold-hearted, selfish people. That is no news to you,

you have always declared them to be such. Mr. and Mrs. Gower have heard from them to-day."

Then as quietly as he could he told her the contents of the letter.

At the first mention of her cousin's approaching marriage, Kate started, but when he told her the name of the man who was to marry Hester, Kate gave no sign of emotion or interest. She kept tight hold of the book with untrembling fingers, and held her face so that he could only see her profile. There was nothing to be read in the downcast eyes or the firmly-closed lips.

When he had finished his recital, she still being silent, after a little pause, he went on:

"You see in their selfishness they are glad to be rid of you; they don't want you, and I want you so much. Let me take care of you all my life, stay as my wife, Kate."

A sharp struggle was going on in the girl's mind. She had been so long accustomed to look upon Charley Lewis as the lawful captive of her bow and spear, that to hear of him as her cousin's accepted husband gave her a pang. At the same time she recognised, in the midst of her pain and mortification, that she had never felt real, devoted, lasting love for him.

These were some of the thoughts that coursed rapidly through her brain while Dr. Dacre was pleading his cause in rather jerky sentences.

"Are you sure?—isn't it Nina you want?" she said doubtfully, when she was obliged to speak.

"I never wanted anyone till I saw you, and I've never ceased wanting you from that moment," he said truthfully.

"Good gracious! fancy going on 'wanting' in silence so long, and behaving all the time just as if you hadn't wanted me. I always thought it was Nina," she repeated pensively, but she was too loyal to word the fear she had that Nina had thought the same.

"But now you know, you believe me, don't you, that it never was Miss Gower?" And he added something foolish relative to the impossibility of its being Miss Gower, or Miss anyone else, after his having once seen Kate.

"What will your sisters say?"

"That is a subject I can't bring myself to consider," he laughed; but, in wrenching Charley Lewis out of her heart, Kate had also wrenched out all the romance

that might ever have been in her. She would be nothing henceforth if not practical.

"But it's a subject we must both consider if I am to be your wife"—here he took her hand, and she let him do it—"your sisters are well off, and they live with you and help you. Now, I'm ill off, for that fifty pounds a year won't even pay for my dresses, and if I marry you I can't help you."

"That fifty pounds a year shall remain in your uncle's pocket. I shall be able to pay for my wife's dresses unaided, I think," he said gleefully. And then Kate let him understand that she would consider herself engaged to him, but distinctly forbade anything like "love-making."

"You'll go on coming here just as usual, till it's convenient to be married, and till then we'll make no difference. It's been a happy time at Blindon, I don't want it altered a bit, so we'll just go on as we have gone on, only I'll tell Mrs. Gower and Nina that we are going to be married." She was saying this in her firm clear tones, as Nina walked in through the open French window, and it never occurred to Kate to lower her voice.

So Nina heard it.

Even if she had not heard it she would have read it in the man's happy face, and successful bearing. He had won his love! All Nina had to do was to bear the loss of hers.

Nina was a real woman, and never was she truer and more womanly than in the days that ensued, when, with unflagging interest and untiring zeal, she went with her mother about the task of providing a liberal trousseau for Dr. Dacre's cool young betrothed.

She even won his sisters to regard Miss Tierney as what she was, and not as the circus-rider she had seemed to be. And she delicately taught Dr. Dacre to believe that she liked and esteemed him ever so much more now that he had shown such discretion in his choice. But sometimes the prosaic quiet acceptance of her own good fortune, which Kate evinced, goaded Miss Gower into feeling that there was a good deal that was faulty and inadequate in the arrangement.

However that may be, Dr. Dacre was supremely happy in his lot, and hopefully in love with his wife, though his sisters persisted in thinking that he had wickedly and wilfully neglected the opportunity of winning the young lady of Blindon, in

order to gratify what they always stigmatised as a young man's fancy.

Perhaps it was just as well for the continuance of Dr. Dacre's peace of mind that neither he nor his wife ever knew that shortly after their quiet marriage a gentleman presented himself at Blindon, sending in a card bearing the name of "Mr. Charles Lewis," and enquiring for Miss Tierney.

Mr. and Mrs. Gower were out, but Nina saw him.

"Before you ask a single question I will tell you that Miss Tierney is married," she began, for she thought he had come on behalf of his wife's family to order Kate home.

His dismay was so unmistakable, his utterances of disappointment and wounded love so open, that they soon came to an understanding.

He had never been on the brink of marriage with Hester Tierney. They had tried to inveigle him and he had escaped the net. They had maligned poor Kate to him cruelly; they had concealed their knowledge of her place of refuge from him. It was only now, just now before his coming to Blindon, that he had gained a glimmering of the truth from one of Hester's young brothers. And now he had come too late! Come to find her married and false, while he had been so true!

Nina was sorry for him, but more for the sake of Dr. Dacre than for that of Dr. Dacre's young wife. She would not show her sorrow or sympathy. She would not even give him the poor morbid pleasure of letting him know that Kate had ever talked of him and longed for him. On the contrary, she painted such a vivid picture of Kate's happiness and contentment, that she sent him back to Warwickshire feeling himself a bitterly aggrieved man.

It is a sharp trouble to Mrs. Gower that her daughter has not made a brilliant marriage yet. The seasons are rolling over her head, and though she is beautiful still, she is no longer graced with that beauty of youth which can afford to wait. Dr. Dacre and his wife speak sometimes of the persistent way in which Nina clings to an unmarried life, and with manly penetration and discernment he says:

"No one can like or admire Nina Gower more than I do; but she was spoilt in her first season. She will always look too high."

Honest fellow! he does not dream of what his wife feels sure of—that Nina has never looked above him.

PENELOPE.

By MARY SEYMOUR.

PART I.

THERE is, or was—for in these days of change it is dangerous to make oneself responsible for the stability of anything—a row of tall houses somewhat south of the Kensington Road. The ground-floor was built for shops, and seemed to fulfil its destiny, but the inhabitants for the second, third, and fourth floors were slow to arrive, although the top storey, consisting of two rooms, afforded an entrancing view of roof and chimney-pot to the north, and of the distant Surrey hills to the south.

Intending tenants seldom revelled in the delights offered to them. Flight after flight of uncarpeted wooden staircase frightened them away from the Elysium they might attain, and few indeed were those active and hopeful enough to reach the top. The interest and pleasure of the row may therefore be imagined when the two rooms on the fourth storey at Number Three were really taken and occupied.

The excitement reached its climax when the tenants were seen to be ladies, and guessed to be artists. Mr. Bradley, the spruce stationer on the ground-floor, was most pressing in his offers of assistance, and Edward, the office-boy, invented messages of the most openly impossible character in order to obtain some sight of the glories of upstairs.

He would arrive opportunely with half a torn newspaper or a dusty unaddressed envelope, "which perhaps belonged to the ladies," just as some specially tempting package was carried upstairs, and he considered himself a privileged mortal if allowed to assist at the unpacking of some of the pictures and busts, which found in him an admiring, if not highly-critical, observer. He advised as to the arrangement of peacock's feathers over the velvet-hung mantelpiece, and toiled up and down willingly with coals or other uninteresting objects, making himself generally useful and civil without, be it said, much hope of receiving many shillings in return, for shillings were scarce with the two girls who were making their first start in life. But if shillings were scarce smiles were plentiful, and it is seldom that any room is furnished or arranged amid such *peals* of happy laughter as echoed through those two carpetless apartments.

It was when the two rooms were ready, one for work and the other for play, that the occasion was celebrated by a big afternoon tea-party, at which a large and non-descript party assembled—many students from the neighbouring school of art, a few stately ladies who represented either personally or vicariously possible pupils, and a small sprinkling of men; most of them kindly, eager, and critical, and one or two utterly, completely, and entirely bored.

Mr. Thomas Brown was in the latter category. His sister had brought him, and was now drinking tea with the others in the pretty back-room where there was no space for him, and he stood in the work-room, looking in a melancholy way at a picture on an easel, and trying to conceal his devouring anxiety to escape from the atmosphere of art-criticism.

"Now what do you think of that arm?" said a voice at his side; somehow there was an anxiety in the tone which surprised him; had any human being ever asked his opinion upon a point of art before? "Is the attitude constrained or no?"

He looked at the picture, at the straight white-robed figure upon the canvas, at the calm impassive face, at the drooping arms which held a bunch of faded daffodils, at the cold, uncertain background, and then turned to the speaker:

"I am afraid," he said honestly, "I know nothing of drawing, and I don't understand this——"

"It is only a study, of course. I should not dare to give it a name to all of them, but," with a quick glance which seemed at once to recognise him as in no way a dangerous critic, "in my own mind I mean it to be *Proserpine*. I dare say you guessed it from the faded daffodils. 'She gathers all things mortal with cold immortal hands.' Those lines were running in my head all the time I was painting. But I am afraid that arm is a little too stiff."

She looked at the figure with regretful eyes, and Mr. Brown took advantage of her preoccupation to transfer his attention from the canvas to herself. He liked her decidedly better than her picture; she was a tall girl with rough, curly brown hair, and a pair of rosy cheeks which paint would have found it difficult to reproduce on canvas or human skin. She was nice to look at and different from other girls, Tom thought, although there were hundreds of young women in London curiously like her, even to her grey-green

frock, her strings of amber beads, and the bunch of daffodils at her throat.

"Do you know," she said, turning round and looking up at him with a smile suppressed on her lips, but gleaming in her eyes, "I suspect you have been horribly bored this afternoon? You don't care for pictures, and no one has talked of anything else. I am so sorry, but what can I do to amuse you? If you will only tell me what you do like, I will try to be sympathetic."

No man likes to find himself set on one side by a young and pretty woman, as unable to share in that which interests and delights her, unless indeed he can openly confess his ignorance as a proof of smiling superiority. Tom was too conscious of his own demerits to do this, so he humbly said that all he asked for was instruction in art, and perhaps she would kindly show him some more pictures and complete his education.

The young lady was a person of tact, and in the works she showed him dwelt but little either on idea or execution, amusing him rather by pointing out the various appearances of a table-cloth, the original of which hung upon the wall, as the tapestried hangings of a lady's bower, the carpet of a presence-chamber, and the covering of a dying knight. Encouraged by finding that art has its ludicrous side, he launched into friendly criticism, and ruined himself in the eyes of his companion, by going into ecstasies over the "real appearance" of a flower-pot in the sketch she showed him of some quaint old houses in Chester.

"It looks so real! Just exactly the red you so often see," he went on, unconscious of his companion's growing sense of the gulf between them. "I can't think how you manage it."

The artist hurriedly removed the work and substituted something else; a red sky all aglow with colour, and a foreground of dark houses with two or three tall ladders against the crimson.

"Oh, I like that," cried the young man, ingenuously speaking from his heart; "it reminds me of Venice."

"It is the memory of a sunset in the City Road," said she demurely.

"The City Road!" and his tones fell from appreciative criticism to deprecativè contempt at once.

"I teach drawing in a City school, and walking westward down the City Road from my work, I see some lovely skies. I only wish I could remember them better,

for, after all, one can only paint what one sees. I am glad you like it."

For being a sensible young woman, this eager artist cared something for what the outside world liked as well as for what the artistic circle discussed and admired.

"It reminded me of Venice," he made reply, gratified at her tone.

"Ah! you have been to Venice. Now," with a perfect simplicity which showed that she was unconscious of the strangeness of the question, "how much did your journey cost you?"

Tom Brown hesitated. He had spent a fortnight in Paris, on his way to Italy, and had stayed at one or two other places en route; it was not easy to say at once within fifty pounds what he had spent.

The girl, seeing his hesitation, misinterpreted it. To be poor without shame, to discuss ways and means openly, to try and save pounds and shillings was the custom of those amongst whom she lived; but she knew there were some of the outside world to whom such confessions brought shame and discomfort, and she spared her companion the possible ignominy with a woman's tact.

"Oh, well! I am afraid your expenses would be no guide to us. Men spend in some ways so much more and in others so much less than women, that one gets little help from hearing the cost of their travels. I cannot have enough money to do it for another two years, for we could not do it under twenty pounds apiece."

"Twenty pounds!" he stammered.

"You think that extravagant?" gravely. "Well, we might manage with eighteen; but then we must never have any food in the middle of the day, and that makes one so tired before evening."

Tom did not protest, for a minute he thought she might be laughing at him; but, when he looked at her, he saw that she was lost in thought, and that her grey eyes had a clouded look of disappointment. He wondered for the first time in his comfortable, rich, sleek life if there really were women who talked like ladies, who looked like ladies, who were ladies, and who yet seemed to think it was a possible thing to go hungry for many days in order to see a rather dull foreign town.

"After all," said the cheerful voice, which was pleasant to his ear as a familiar sound, "it is foolish to complain. 'Here, or nowhere, is our America.'"

He had time to think over this last enigmatical sentence and to admire the

curly rings of short brown hair which lay upon her white forehead and almost hid it from view, for she did not speak again, the utterance of her wish had brought back in a resistless tide her yearning for the land she hardly hoped to see.

The two oddly-assorted people whom chance had brought together for the nonce stood silent side by side, as widely separated in hopes and sympathies as if they had been born in different hemispheres. But there are touches which make the whole world feel its kinship. And at this moment the door of the other room opened, and a mysterious voice cried:

"Pen, milk!"

The young lady started. The young man looked guiltily at the picture in front of him.

"Oh, we have run short of milk; we always do," she said, smiling. "I must go out and get some. I wonder if you would mind—my partner, Miss Burton, is so busy—I wonder if you would mind letting me in."

"Letting you in? I should be delighted, but——"

"You see we are four storeys up, and it takes a good while to go up and down. Will you come down now with me and wait by the hall-door until I return?"

She was putting on her gloves and buttoning them carefully as she spoke; then, snatching up a hat in one hand and a milk-jug in the other, she was out of the room before her companion fully realised the fact that this young lady was going out unabashed to fetch the milk.

He followed her, without attempting to frame any theory of life which should fit in with her extraordinary conduct. The staircase was very dark, and he stumbled somewhat as he went down, on which the young lady apologised.

"I ought to have brought a light, for I shall have to leave you without one whilst I am gone. I hope you don't mind the dark?"

"I am very nervous, and I am afraid I shall scream directly your protecting presence is withdrawn," he made answer, attempting a joke now that he was relieved from the oppressive effects of art.

"You will have plenty of practice, then," said Penelope, "for you may scream for hours, and no one upstairs will hear you."

"Perhaps, then, I may leave you to face these dangers, and fetch the milk for you?"

They were by the hall-door now, and his hand was on the handle, a single ray from the gas-lamp outside falling on her smiling face.

"You don't know the shop, and you would spill the milk, to a certainty," she replied. "Besides, I am used to fetching milk, and probably you are not. You see, there is no bell. I shall rattle the letter-box when I come back."

So saying, she went out into the street, and left the young man to think out the situation at his leisure.

The milk tasted none the worse for the way in which it had been brought in, and Penelope poured him out a cup of tea with pretty, apologetic hospitality when she found he had been neglected, and he drank it in the show-room where the peacock's feathers adorned the mantelshelf. Whilst he sipped it slowly he recognised with that delight at perceiving a familiar object which is the rudimentary stage of art criticism, one or two of the water-colours on the wall.

"You know Cambridge, I see?"

"Yes; do you?"

"I was at Caius some years ago. Have you been there often?"

"I used to go rather often when my sister was at Girton."

"Girton? Oh!"

The sudden blank expression of face, the sudden fall of the voice, were familiar experiences to Penelope when she spoke of her sister, but she had her own amusement out of the situation, a private source of never-failing amusement in comparing her sister as she was with the speaker's probable idea of her.

"Laura," she said to her partner, as soon as the guests were gone, "who was the man you called Mr. Brown?"

"There were two Browns," said prudent Laura, raking the coals out of the fire, "one a rich man, brother of Mrs. Burlington, and the other——"

"My one isn't rich."

"The other writes for the papers."

"I wish I wrote for the papers then. He makes it pay, he's been to Venice. I wonder if The Times will send me if I remit them an account of my travels, illustrated."

"Been done too often," was the laconic answer.

"I always knew I was born fifty years too late. Everything has been done already!"

"Not everything, for the tea-things want washing up. Don't be lazy, Penelope; I am sure it is time to be going home."

PART II.

IF Tom had some difficulty in reconciling his companion's social position, general appearance, and evident culture with the terrible actions of which she was guilty, Penelope experienced no shock of incongruity in comparing his supposed occupation with his mental powers. With feminine rapidity Penelope decided that Mr. Brown wrote short articles on society for certain journals, more remarkable for flippancy of tone than elevation of sentiment or depth of erudition. She was soon confirmed in this belief, for the next time that she met him was when she was copying one of Moroni's portraits in the National Gallery. He appeared to have no particular business there, and stood chatting to her for half an hour, whilst she painted, paying little attention to the pictures, but discussing the people round with good-humoured interest. She supposed he was collecting materials for a series of articles on London picture-galleries. On one point she was convinced—he was not looking at pictures from an artist's point of view, and therefore she took some trouble to give him a little superficial information on the subject, with the hope of thus bringing his readers to a knowledge of higher things—she even told her sister that she was educating the British public by means of a stray journalist.

"Where on earth do you see him?" asked Marian, looking up from the papers she was correcting.

"At the National Gallery," Penelope replied, swinging to and fro the tassel of the blind. It was a lovely evening towards the end of May, and she was enjoying a lazy half-hour after tea. "He is writing articles for some paper—a series of social notes—and he is just now at the Trafalgar Square stage."

Marian accepted the account of the young man's appearance upon the stage of her sister's life in the same spirit of simple faith in which Penelope offered it. To both of them, and to most of their friends, the idea that any ulterior motive must exist would never have presented itself, and if suggested by others, would have been rejected as absurd.

Tom listened patiently to the lectures on art, quite unconscious that Penelope was addressing through him the average newspaper reader, and thus educating the masses. As he never volunteered any remark as to his profession or means of livelihood, it was obviously un-

necessary for her to make any suggestion concerning the one or the other; but having framed her theory, she found no difficulty in fitting in with it alike his actions and his words. It would be difficult to over-rate the peculiar charm which Penelope's quick, active spirit exerted over the slower, calmer mind thus brought into frequent contact with hers; but it was not her intellectual superiority which attracted him, but rather her attitude towards life. He had never before, among all the comfortable rich people who were his daily associates, met with anything like the keen appreciation of the simplest pleasure, the intense enjoyment of the most ordinary beauties which he found in this girl, whom a sunset sky, a waltz played by a German band, or a few lines of poetry, seemed to move to sudden, unaffected happiness. If she worked hard, the light of an intense earnestness made the hours of toil bright with hope, and filled the playtime with the sunshine of a gladness too real to be for an instant conscious or obtrusive.

"I wonder if there is anything you don't like, Miss Thursby," he said one hot day in June, when she had laid aside her work for a few minutes.

"Thousands of things," she answered quickly; "but why think of them? Three years ago, when my sister and I first began to consider life seriously, we decided that the best way of being useful was to work just as hard as we could, and to be as happy between whiles as life would allow us, and besides," she stopped suddenly, "I am going to a dance on the 28th, and I do love dancing."

"I did not know you cared for it."

"It is a fancy dress ball; I have never seen one, and I am so glad Mrs. Burlington asked us."

"Mrs. Burlington—oh, I shall be there."

"I am glad," her eyes danced with delight. "Shall you be in fancy dress? What do you mean to be?"

"I think I shall go as a fool," said Tom grimly. His sister was not yet forgiven for insisting upon his presence. "I shall probably then be the only man there who can look the part he has undertaken."

Penelope remembered this speech when, a fortnight later, she saw the uneasy aspect of the unlucky men who, decked in strange array, asked her to dance, or solemnly paraded past her, some with complete consciousness and open defiance of public opinion as to their absurdity, some with unconcealed shamefacedness, and some with

jaunty self-confidence. The women, who were in the majority, enjoyed the situation amazingly, and contrived, apparently at least, to lose the sense of their own absurd and incongruous costumes in the contemplation of their neighbours. Tom's eyes scanned the motley crowd eagerly for the tall figure which he expected to see in classic drapery and stately repose, and it was a consequent shock to him to discover Penelope, dressed in a short silk skirt and flowered chintz, and waltzing with a very un-nautical-looking sailor. He had plenty of opportunity for watching her face, across which a dozen smiles were flitting, some of them lingering and deepening into laughter, as her companion talked energetically and waltzed languidly. Tom felt an unwarrantable degree of anger at the good understanding between the two, and almost came to the conclusion that a keen enjoyment of life, when displayed in the society of other people, may have its drawbacks.

When the waltz was over, and Penelope had smiled at him, he made his way across the room to her, and asked her for a dance, in a way which made the sailor feel, as it was probably intended to do, that his presence was unnecessary, and caused him rapidly to disappear.

"Do you call that a fancy dress?" said Penelope, pointing to a row or two of gold braid on Tom's dress-clothes. "It is a mere sham; all the same I am glad," with a remembrance as to his sensitiveness about money, "that you are not dressed up like some of the others."

There was an unconscious acknowledgment of responsibility for his doings in this speech, which went to Tom's heart and gratified it; but Penelope was only actuated by a desire to cover what she felt to be a false move.

"May I ask what you are?"

She looked at him with affected surprise.

"Don't you see I am Mary, Mary, quite contrary? You ought to have recognised my silver bells and cockle-shells," as she pointed to the ornaments of her costume, nor was the pretty maid wanting to complete the rhyme, as the smiles brought out the dimples in her rosy cheeks, and her eyes danced to the music.

"I am afraid I was very stupid, but I expected to see you in classical dress."

"To draw the attention of the world to my un-Greek profile," turning her face so that he saw the outline of an unclassical,

but most charming nose. "The power of recognising and submitting to the inevitable is the mark of the true artist. How well you dance," she said, after they had joined the crowd, and paused for want of space. "It is nice, isn't it?"

Tom agreed cordially, but dances were hardly the sources of keen enjoyment to him that they were to his partner.

"I wonder if you ever did anything very wicked," she went on after a pause, "and if you found it successful. There are some roses in the refreshment-room that I am dying to steal; but if I take them I am afraid they will be dead before to-morrow."

"Why are those special roses so charming?"

"Just the colour for my picture. I am painting in the cloisters at Westminster, and I must have some bits of colour on the grey stone, and these are too perfect."

Tom's interest in the roses faded as he heard of the Westminster cloisters. If she was painting there it was obviously impossible that she should also be in the National Gallery, whence he had missed her during the last fortnight.

"Marian," said Penelope, as they drove home in a hansom in the early dawn of June, "my converted journalist was there, and thought you the prettiest girl in the room. It was such a joke to see his face when I told him you were my Girton sister. I flatter myself that if I have done nothing else in life, I have shaken that young man's rampant Philistinism."

PART III.

THE cool and shady cloisters were not empty of life and human interest when Tom turned into them from the glare and bustle of Westminster. A few artists were sketching more or less industriously, and a small crowd of admirers were watching more or less critically. He had no trouble in distinguishing his own special artist in her big black hat, with her bright eyes as full of life and vivacity as they had been the night before. Something darkened them for an instant as Tom drew near; it was only the shadow of a shade, and the old look came back as she shook hands with him, and deepened into a warmer sense of happiness as he held out to her a bunch of roses of the very crimson that she had admired the previous night.

"Roses! For me? Oh, thank you! How good of you to think of me. Did you get them from the country to-day?" For roses are plentiful in June even for

Londoners, and Penelope had buried her face in more than one friendly bunch before to-day. Tom was spared, however, the necessity of explanation or prevarication, for her quick eye had caught sight of the wires and the way in which the flowers were fastened.

"These flowers came from Covent Garden; did you," her voice faltered a little—the offence was enormous—"did you buy them?"

Tom tried to say he stole them, but Penelope did not attend to his joke, which no observer would have suspected to be anything but a solemn appeal for mercy, had his voice and manner alone been considered. She went on painting with a certain dogged resolution which revealed a new phase in her character. After a pause she asked, without lifting her eyes from her painting, and with a touch of embarrassment which surprised herself quite as much as it did her companion:

"Mr. Brown, do you come here with a purpose?"

Tom felt and looked guilty. He was a little astonished at the question, but he had long ceased to wonder at any of Penelope's actions, and he had reached a stage at which criticism was impossible. Otherwise her words might have startled him.

"Because if you really find it helps you to think," she went on, quite recovering her usual composure as she discovered that the young man was unable to resent her interference in his private affairs, "you cannot call it a waste of time. My sister says when she has anything which worries her she can often think it out by sitting quietly here and listening to the service in the Abbey." Tom humbly thought he could do the same, and seated himself in one of the arches to think out the subject which interested him.

"You know," said Penelope, dropping back into her old confidential tones as she was reassured that Tom was really at work upon his interesting series of articles, "I don't approve of waste of time or money," with a severe look at the roses beside her. "You bought them, and you ought not to throw away your money like that."

"Indeed, roses are very cheap in June," urged Tom, who had never considered whether the month was June or December.

"In any case you must not, please, buy things for me," Penelope concluded with a grave air of dignity, which completed Tom's discomfiture.

He might have got up and gone away, but there was no place in London so exactly suited for a hot June day as these quiet cloisters, cool and shady, with the green square of grass in the centre, and the quaint old houses beyond, creamy against a blue sky. The busy world outside was forgotten. The children, or foreigners who wandered by, guide-book in hand, lowered their voices and slackened their steps under the silent arches. It seemed to Tom, whose imagination was not, however, of a high order, that he and the girl in the grey linen frock were the only two really living creatures in a world of shadows, who came and went in a purposeless fashion, and were forgotten as soon as they disappeared.

"It is nearly finished," said Penelope, as she scattered the roses on the pavement. "I hope you are getting on well and that I do not disturb you by talking. I wish for your sake some Americans would come here and criticise me loudly, but the place is empty to-day."

"There seems to be no one here but ourselves."

"Wait a minute—twelve is striking. Look!" She pointed as she spoke to the long, dark, arched passage which led into a sunny paved court beyond.

The whole place seemed, as Tom said, deserted, but at the last stroke of twelve a sudden rush of life and energy broke like a stream of sunshine into its quiet and silence. It was only the boys coming out of school, the dignity and deliberation of the seniors being concealed by the enthusiastic rush of the rosy-cheeked juniors—white-collared little boys, who were dispersed in all directions before Tom had time to realise the meaning of the scene.

Penelope had friends amongst the younger ones, as she had nearly everywhere amongst all classes and all ages, railway porters and policemen, public-school boys and overworked nurse-girls. Nobody could resist the charm of her face and manner who was not wrapped in a triple mail of conventionality and self-esteem, and even such were moved by the unconscious grace of her smile.

As it struck one o'clock she laid down her brush and turned to Tom, to whom she had not spoken for at least ten minutes.

"Are you hungry?" she asked. "I am, desperately. I think I can have some lunch to-day; wait until I look."

She drew out her purse and turned slowly over its contents.

"I have just fourpence to spare; will you go and buy some biscuits?"

Tom professed his readiness to go anywhere, and listened to the details as to the place, nature, and amount of the purchase with proper respect. He had never imagined that any human being could pay so much heed to the best method of expending fourpence, and extract so much pleasure from the process.

"There is more than four pennyworth in the bag," she declared when he returned to her side; but she was satisfied with his humble acknowledgment that he had spent an equal sum on his own account. They ate their biscuits in the little cloisters secluded from passing strangers, and studied the plants in the centre garden with scientific curiosity whenever an approaching footstep warned them of a possible intruder.

"Biscuits do crumble so," said Penelope plaintively, "they betray one to the public, but they are delicious food."

Tom thought them a little unsatisfying, but would not have acknowledged it for the world. It was part of this dreamland into which he had found his way that the very food should be wanting in substantiality.

"I am going now," Penelope said when four o'clock had struck, "and I am going to take home all my belongings, for the picture is really finished, really and truly, though I might stay here for another fortnight worrying myself about details. As you are here, perhaps you will help me to carry my easel to the station."

She spoke as if an easel six feet high were a trifle which most men carried in their daily walks, and certainly never suspected that she was making a heavy claim upon her companion's courtesy.

"Marian does not like newspaper parcels," she went on, happily unconscious of Tom's feelings, as she rolled up her paint-brushes in her Daily News. "But I think it is mere nonsense to care whether your brushes are done up in brown-paper or no."

Thus Tom started from the Abbey carrying an easel, accompanied by a girl bearing a big canvas, a newspaper parcel, and her wet palette. He felt the absurdity of the situation, but was tickled still more by discovering how very little the world saw of this absurdity. Nobody seemed in the least surprised at meeting him thus laden, and the couple made their way to the

St. James's Park Station without exciting any comment from the passers-by.

He once suggested a hansom, but Penelope was so obviously convinced that her possession of a return-ticket was a complete barrier to the perpetration of any such extravagance, that he did not venture to repeat his suggestion.

"I did rather hope—" Penelope spoke in a more depressed voice than was usual to her; "I did rather hope that some American would come to-day, and take a fancy to my picture. I think an American ought to want a picture of Westminster."

"I know of plenty of English people who would like to have it," Tom answered as he nearly tumbled over the legs of the easel. "It is a long way prettier than any of the pictures I have."

Penelope concluded he had a collection of chromo-lithographs, and sighed to think that as yet his education in art had not reached the most elementary stage of classification.

"There are a couple of Wilson's my father was very proud of, and they are not to be compared with your picture."

The young man was in love, and must be forgiven for the audacity of his statement, but it was not the comparison which startled Penelope.

"A couple of Wilson's! Oh, where are they?"

"I have not got them in town, they are down at my place in the country."

"At your place in the country," Penelope said mechanically. Then she stopped and looked at him with a strange expression on her face. "Mr. Brown, don't you write for the papers?"

"I am afraid not," said Tom, laughing at her look of absolute blank amazement.

"Are you Mrs. Burlington's brother?"

"Did you not know I was?"

"No, certainly not," said Penelope curtly, resuming her walk.

She did not speak again; a sudden dark curtain seemed to have fallen between her and her companion; she was only conscious of a pain which drove her into indignation and yet made her cautious of speech. Unluckily, Tom took the one step a woman cannot forgive: he attempted a joke when she was feeling acutely.

"Are you angry with me because I don't write for a newspaper? It is the editor's fault, not mine, I assure you."

Penelope turned her eyes upon him with sudden, and to his mind, unprovoked passion.

"I don't care what you write for, but I do think you should not have deceived me in this matter. I hate rich people, they are all selfish and self-absorbed, and I wish I had never seen you."

They were at the station by now, and she held out her hand for her easel, but Tom answered her very gently :

"I do not like to hear you say that ; but you must let me see you into the train anyhow."

The situation was comic, the surroundings commonplace, but human feelings decline to adjust themselves to external circumstances, and there were the elements of real misery in Tom's heart as he managed to dispose of his charge and her unmanageable belongings in the railway-carriage, and received her cold bow and "thank you" in reply.

Penelope was singularly silent all the evening, restless over her needlework and unable to read.

At last she said abruptly :

"Marian, have you ever thought about rich people ?"

Marian lifted up her beautiful face from the book she was studying, and waited for some explanation. Her position as teacher to a class of thirty-five girls, had made her cautious about answering remarks of very wide application.

"I mean do you hate them—all ?"

"Hate them ! No, Pen dear, why do you ask ? I hope we shall never be rich. I think much money makes people blind to the real meaning of life, but there are people who never could discover it under any circumstances, and it is just as well that they should be wealthy, comfortable; and commonplace."

Seldom had Marian's eloquence produced so much effect. She was surprised herself at the result, as Penelope threw down her work and burst into a sudden passion of tears.

Tears were not common in their home. A laughing disregard of the inconveniences of poverty ; a brave endurance of unsuccess ; a half-comic, half-serious despair over disappointment ; and a genuine enjoyment of all innocent pleasures—these were amongst the moods of both sisters ; but tears, sobs, and low spirits were rare.

"Don't, darling, you're too tired. I tell you what, we will have a holiday on Saturday ; I saved seven shillings on my hat yesterday, and we will have a day on the river, and get a good rest."

"Let us take Lizzie Morris then," said Penelope, drying her eyes in a shamefaced way. "She has so few pleasures that we ought to do something for her."

PART IV.

THE boating party-came off, but Lizzie Morris did not share the pleasure as Penelope had hoped. A chance word from Penelope at her drawing-class next day made Mrs. Burlington acquainted with the plan, and nothing would satisfy that kindly lady but that the sisters should join a river-party, at which she was expecting a large number of friends. Penelope accepted, with some misgivings as to Marian's approval, which were needless, for, when the sisters met, it was Marian who first apologised that she could not keep her engagement ; she had promised to look over some examination-papers for a fellow-teacher, and these must be done on Saturday. Her only regret was that Penelope must lose her holiday ; she was proportionately rejoiced at the arrangement suggested by her sister. Thus it came to pass that Penelope formed one of a large and merry party which started under a blazing sun from Richmond Bridge.

At first the heat was oppressive, but by degrees the sun sank lower, and Penelope found pleasure in everything ; in the boats that passed and repassed ; in the swans sailing by ; in the coolness of the water in which she dipped her hand ; in the delicious strawberries and cream which she and her companions ate as they sat upon the river's bank, and waited for the kettle to boil. If she was not quite contented, she shut her eyes wilfully to the truth, and almost persuaded herself that she was perfectly happy.

"My dear Miss Thursby, I am afraid you have made no sketches. Can you see Kingston Bridge ? It would look delightful now, I know."

Penelope took its charms upon faith, for there was no possibility of using sight in the matter.

"Oh, you must make a little sketch. Tom, do take Miss Thursby out in your little boat for ten minutes, to sketch the bridge ; you will have time before the kettle boils. Miss Thursby, I think you know my brother—Mr. Brown."

The two bowed silently, as fate, represented by Mrs. Burlington, brought them together in close and unexpected proximity. Neither seemed inclined to speak until they were well in sight of the bridge, and

then Tom only asked her if he should keep the boat steady. The boat was steadier than Penelope's hand, which shook a little as she put together a few hurried lines. She was, naturally, uncomfortable as she remembered the way in which she had last met him.

"I think that will do, thank you," she said after a few minutes; "I am sorry to have given you the trouble."

She looked at him as she spoke, as if in defiance of her own feelings; the sun was in her eyes, or something else dazzled and confused her, and at that moment a bustling little steam-launch came puffing round the corner. Penelope pulled first one tiller-rope and then the other.

"Oh, what am I to do?" she cried, completely losing her head; "I don't know which to pull."

"Don't pull either," said Tom very steadily; "drop them both at once."

Penelope obeyed instinctively, for Tom spoke in a tone which enforced obedience, and gave her confidence, as he pulled a stroke which brought the bows of their little craft out of danger, just as the steam-launch sent forth a whistle more ferocious than the objurgations of its steersman.

"That was my fault," Penelope owned penitently.

Tom did not answer; they were drawing near the rest of their party, and his chance was slipping away.

"Miss Thursby," he began with severity, which would have appeared absurd to a third person, but which by no means bore that character to his solitary listener, "what do you think of a man who despises another because he is poor?"

Penelope muttered a few words, which Tom did not appear to hear.

"I think you would call him a snob, would you not? Well then, I don't see that it is any fairer to despise a man because he has too much money than because he has too little."

It was not a long or eloquent sermon, but it produced a result which more elaborate and more lengthy disquisitions have often failed to effect—it convinced its hearer. Penelope, during the whole of the quiet, cool row home, was thinking over the astonishing fact that this young Philistine, whose education she had been attempting, had rebuked her for her narrow-mindedness, and had rebuked her justly.

The party broke up at Richmond, and it was natural enough that Mr. Brown should

promise to see Penelope home, as the girl was the only one to travel by the Metropolitan line of railway; but she would have given much to escape from the escort which was a matter of course to the rest of the party.

Tom took her ticket and his own, and then when they were seated in a first-class compartment, was annoyed at his own thoughtlessness, for the shabby little purse which Penelope drew out was emptier than when he had last seen it. She insisted upon his receiving the money without listening to a word of excuse, and then sat looking silently out of window, watching the lamps as they flashed past. Suddenly she turned to him, and with a return to her old, simple manner, spoke:

"Mr. Brown, you were quite right, and I was quite wrong in what I said. I beg your pardon. I am sure it ought not to make the least difference whether one is rich or no, but one cannot outgrow one's prejudices." She smiled as she spoke, her bright eyes looked at him with friendliness and forgiveness.

"I wish my money was at the bottom of the sea," he answered, "if it is to separate me from you; for I love you better than anything in the world, Penelope. I think you know that."

She looked at him with unabashed eyes of sweet surprise, which were sufficient to stem the words upon his lips; but it was impossible to stop there, and he spoke a few hurried words, which were, however, clear enough to her ears.

"Oh no—no," she said at last; "it could never be—we are so different, and have such different lives. You don't care for the things I care for."

"I care for you," urged Tom, unwilling to profess, even then, any deep devotion to art.

"Please say no more about it," Penelope answered decidedly. "It would never do, I know."

It was not a courteous or considerate reply, but it is difficult to suppose that any answer could take the sting from "No!" Tom, at all events, accepted it as final, and did not attempt to reopen the question. Penelope's unabashed self-possession was destructive of hope, and if he bore himself with an outward calm to match her own, he suffered none the less keenly.

"Indeed, it would never do," she began again, when they had left the train and were

walking to her home through the narrow streets. "You will be glad some day that I was wiser than you, and saw how little we were suited to one another."

Tom urged no answer; he had always had a very honest conviction that Penelope was too good for him, and he felt equally clear now that the one thing which might have made them equals could never bring them together. If she had loved him, she could never have spoken as she did.

They paused on the doorstep of her lodgings.

"I will wish you good-bye here then; I do not suppose I shall see you again, but I should like you to know that, though you could not love me, you have made me very happy, dear."

Penelope did not answer; for the first time she realised that Tom must be all or nothing to her; that she must be ready to put her hand in his and face the world with him, or never touch his hand or see his face again. The choice had been her own, only she had not understood how much she was setting aside. He waited some time for her to speak, in vain; then lifting her hand in his, he touched it very gently with his lips, and left her, without another word.

He had not gone ten paces, when he heard her steps behind him.

"No! don't go—don't go without saying good-bye." He turned; tears were running down her cheeks, and her voice was indistinct with emotion. "I don't mean anything more than just to say good-bye;" but then, in spite of training and tradition, Tom kissed his sweetheart under the gas-lamp, regardless of possible passers-by.

"Going to marry a rich man, who knows nothing of art, and never reads a book! Pen, Pen! my darling Pen!" was Marian's cry. "For such a marriage someone must sacrifice a great deal, and I don't think it will be the man. You will have everything against you—different tastes, different habits, different views of life."

"It is quite true," said Penelope wistfully, twisting her hands in a distressed way quite new to her; "it is quite true; but, Marian, I don't know how it is—it is an absurd thing to say, and I don't like it myself—but," coming nearer and kneeling beside her sister, so that she might murmur in her ear, "I am afraid I really do love him."

She hardly breathed the words above a

whisper, but no argument could have silenced Marian so completely as did that half-broken murmur. What answer could be made?

IN THE GOLDEN PRIME.

By ELLEN MULLEY.

CHAPTER I.

AWAY across the English Channel, where a little island lies, a sweet spring day was softly closing in, a tender silence brooding over land and sea. The echo of the sunset-gun had died away. Over the darkening waters twilight had fallen. No sound save the faint murmur of the incoming tide, or the late call of thrush or blackbird farther inland, came to break the stillness.

In an old manor-house, grey and ivy-grown, nestling dim in the twilight at a steep hill's foot, with lawn and flower-beds stretching down almost to where the waves came rippling in, a young girl sat at her piano. Her fingers touched with a certain old-fashioned grace the yellow keys, for the instrument, like the house, was old and time-worn.

The girl's voice, at least, was young and fresh enough as it went thrilling through the quiet room, and—for the windows were wide open—into the still soft night beyond. The song, a quaint French ballad, sounded strangely sad, and the clear young voice trembled in the darkness.

Suddenly the song ceased. From the garden came a quick, light step, a hand was laid upon the sill of one of the open windows, the figure of a young man came leaping in; a young manly voice came sounding through the room.

"Jeanne, Jeanne, I say," then the voice changed: "Why, Jeanne, what is it? What has happened?"

But still Jeanne did not answer.

"You are ill?" Still no answer. "Some one has vexed you." At the bare thought the young man's voice grew angry. "Who is it?" he cried; then, suddenly calming himself, gently tried to pull the girl's hands from before her hidden face.

"Oh, Louis," said the girl, as he got her hands in his, "how silly you are!" And then she laughed and tried to make believe there were no tears upon her face.

"Am I? I am glad to hear it is only that," said Louis simply. "I was afraid it was something much worse."

It is quite a young voice that speaks, and, now that it is evident there is nothing very much the matter, it rings gaily enough.

"I was afraid you were unhappy, and that is not like you, Jeanne, you know; and somehow, now I am so happy myself," the young fellow chattered on, "it seems as if every one else must be happy too. No one should be miserable if I could help it—you least of all. Why, it would break my heart!"

"Not quite, I think," Jeanne said softly. She had got away her hands, and sat turning a little ring upon one of the fingers round and round.

"Oh, but it would, though," Louis said stoutly, as Jeanne gave a little friendly movement of dissent. "Of course I am happy," he went on; "how could I be otherwise?"

At the sound of triumph in his voice the girl gave a little shiver.

"But I want you to be happy, too. Is it so very wonderful, dear? Why, it seems to me, Jeanne, we have never been apart, you and I. The same scrapes and tears to follow; the same jollifications; the haymaking, the—oh, Jeanne, you are not going to forget it all now!"

"Forget it," his companion repeated below her breath, and with another little shiver.

"You are cold," Louis cried, starting up. "Let me shut the windows; I should have done it before." Presently he came back to her side. "What was I saying? Oh, about the dear old times. You are not going to say that they are over, Jeanne? Why need there be any difference? We shall only be happier still." Jeanne shook her head. "Why on earth not? Oh, Jeanne, you are never going to be jealous?"

At this his companion laughed outright.

"Oh, you conceited boy! don't you see she has nothing to do with it? If she were not here at all—if she had never come!" The girl paused a moment, and then went quickly on: "It would have been all the same. Nothing can go on for ever—not even haymaking, and—and other things," she wound up vaguely. "The old times can never come back," she went on. "Now I am grown up—why do you laugh?—now I am grown up, and you are a man, we could never have gone about together and have done the same things again."

"Why not?" asked Louis sharply; "we are cousins, and——"

Jeanne shook her head. "We are nothing of the sort; we never were."

Louis had never heard Jeanne's voice like that before. What was it that was changing her like this? He got up and walked angrily away.

"Oh, of course, if we are not cousins now, we weren't before; I suppose I know that much," he said. "But I didn't think you were going to turn round on a fellow like this, Jeanne. Why, only a week ago you were ready for anything."

"A week ago!" Jeanne echoed; "I feel as if it was years."

CHAPTER II.

BEAUTIFUL in the early dawn of a May morning the little island lay, basking in the bright spring sunshine. The tender flush of but lately opened leaves clothed hill and valley; orchards bloomed in stars of pink and white; odours from a myriad blossoms came borne on every breeze. In hidden dells streamlets sang on their morning way to the blue sparkling sea that washed and circled round it all, while overhead another blue—clear, radiant, sun-steeped—canopied it.

A young girl was standing in the early sunshine on the green-clad summit of the hill, that sheltered the old manor-house of La Tourelle. She had looked on the same scene a thousand times before; near or far there was not a tree-top, not a speck of white gleaming road, that she did not know by heart. Yet as her eyes fell on it now, it seemed to her it had never looked so fair. Hill and valley, the blue glittering bay, the little old-world town of St. Aubin's almost at her feet, the bigger town of St. Heliers flashing back the morning sun at the far-off end of the bay, away there to her left—all lay spread before her, just as she had known them all her life.

"Yes, I suppose it is a good world," she was saying to herself; "and yet, oh, why must things change and alter? The sea, the sky, the hills, they keep the same; it is we who change. I suppose it is only a little place," she went on, "as Tina says, but it's big enough to be happy in—if only we were let alone. But others come, and then—then it is never the same again!"

She said the last few words aloud with a little cry. A girlish laugh sounded at her elbow.

"Oh, Jeanne!" said the new comer,

"what a dear old goose you are! I believe you don't think there is a world outside this little shred of an island of yours. As for people coming to it and waking you all up, you ought to be much obliged to them. I know I should be. And as for things changing, of course they change; only fancy a world where they didn't!"

"But when you get used to a place, and to the people?" said Jeanne, putting out her hand.

"Then I think it is time to change—the place and the people. Oh, you need not look so scandalised. I should never want to change you, you are too delightful; but it is true all the same."

"And Louis?" Jeanne asked with a little laugh.

"Hum! Louis, ah! Well, I don't know."

The girl put her pretty head on one side, and pretended to look doubtful.

"But you care for him, Tina?" and Jeanne looked anxiously in her companion's laughing face.

"Care for him? of course I care for him! I think he is the dearest, handsomest little Frenchman in the world—there!"

Jeanne—quiet Jeanne—stamped her foot angrily.

"He is no more French than you are," she cried hotly. "He is Jersier to the backbone. As for little, he is not a great red-faced Englishman, if that is what you mean."

"When first I saw him," Tina went on provokingly, "I did not think I should like him at all. I could only laugh, he looked so comical with his dark cropped head and that little black moustache of his—no Englishman goes about like that."

"But you care for him now," persisted Jeanne anxiously, "or how will you live here all your life? It is only a little place, as you say, and the people are always the same."

"Yes, it is a little place," Tina said slowly, looking round her, "and the people—but, bah! it is not yet, why trouble oneself?"

"Trouble——" Jeanne was beginning, but Tina turned a deaf ear.

"Oh dear, how hungry I am!" she cried; "if we stay up here much longer I shall eat you!"

She had caught Jeanne's hand in hers, and in another moment the two were running lightly down the hill. At the hill's foot Louis Le Quesne was standing,

his dark head uncovered, his little black moustache freshly trimmed and pointed.

"Here you are at last," he said. "How hungry you both look! Come in, Tina, and have some breakfast."

La Tourelle, the old manor-house, was a very old house indeed. Le Quesnes have owned La Tourelle for I cannot tell you how many hundred years. The Le Quesne who owns it now is old and childless, and it is his nephew Louis who will come after him. The young man and Jeanne (who is old Mrs. Le Quesne's niece) have, indeed, known no other home. Louis was at St. Servan, just across the water, for two or three years, at the college there, it is true, but he was glad enough to get back to the old place, and has never cared to leave it since. But there is time enough to see the great world yet; meanwhile, the young man goes happily enough on his way, through his own little one. There are the lands of La Tourelle, some fifty vergées or so (somewhere about twenty English acres)—for the holding is a large one—to be ploughed and sown, hay and corn to be gathered in, vraise to be cut and carried—twice a year this—and spread over the soil; apples to be gathered and cider made; sleek, soft-eyed cows to be cared for. There is, too, a scarlet coat to be donned more or less often, for of course Louis holds a commission in the local militia, and his name figures as a lieutenant in the English Army List, where his uncle's also may be found, considerably higher up. And then last, though certainly not least, there is Jeanne. There is someone else too—Tina. Six weeks ago the hot-headed young fellow had not so much as heard her name; now he wildly declares to Jeanne—poor Jeanne!—that he does not know how he ever can have lived without her! The land, the cows, the scarlet coat even, have not seen much of Louis the last few weeks. Day after day the three young people have scoured the island together, almost living out of doors in the soft, bright, spring weather.

Tina Daunt is quite a near neighbour. She had come on a visit to a villa close by early in April, and now May is here, and in June she must go away. Go back to England and to London, the only place, she thinks, in all the world where one could live, though Louis is not there. Yet she, too, is very much in love indeed, and is never happy save when with Louis or Jeanne. And Jeanne is with them always, they will have it so, and hears

their happy foolish talk, as they make love under her very eyes.

So, in the golden prime, the happy days went by for the two young lovers. The old people at La Tourelle did not take very kindly to the little chattering English girl. Louis had chosen her, so it must be; but it was something quite different to what they had planned or intended, or, indeed, ever dreamed of as possible. And Jeanne, their own little Jeanne, did she care? they asked one another. They watched and watched as the days went by, but they could not tell.

CHAPTER III.

JEANNE, "la p'tite" as the old people, and even Louis, were fond of calling her, was by no means so very little. Straight and slender as a young poplar, it may be that she looked taller than she really was. The free, graceful figure, the large, generous nature, alike struck one.

"No, there is nothing little about our Jeanne," those at La Tourelle would say to one another, to their neighbours, but they called her "la p'tite" all the same. So it was just because there was nothing little about the young girl that, although loving, anxious old eyes watched her in these bright spring days when so much was happening, they learnt so little. She was a little paler, perhaps, but then the roses were always of the faintest on Jeanne's creamy skin; the girlish laugh did not ring out quite so clearly or so often, it might be; but then these soft sweet spring days were trying, and Jeanne was going about so much; or it might be it was fancy altogether. Louis and Tina saw nothing.

"It is Jeanne's birthday soon," said Louis one day, when Tina's stay was drawing to a close. "She will be eighteen. What shall we do, how shall we keep it?"

"Do?" cried Tina; "let us have a picnic, of course."

"The very thing," said Louis. "Where shall it be? who shall we ask? Come here, Jeanne," he cried gaily; "come and help us."

They were in the old-fashioned drawing-room where the piano stood; Jeanne was softly touching the keys.

"Let us go somewhere by ourselves," she said when she heard what they were talking of. "Somewhere not too far, Louis, where the dear old people can come."

"Don't listen to her, Louis," cried Tina. "She is not to have anything to say in the matter; we are going to arrange every-

thing—Louis and I. It is your birthday-treat, and you are to have nothing to do with it, except enjoy it when it comes."

"Very good," said Jeanne, smiling; "I see my part is to be very easy."

"Now, Louis," cried Tina impatiently, "let us go on."

"Us?" echoed Louis, laughing; "it strikes me it is you, mademoiselle, who are going to arrange everything!"

"Of course I am, and it is you who are going to say 'yes' to everything. Listen! In the first place everybody is to be invited, do you understand?"

"Oh, certainly! I only hope the Governor won't object to meet old Le Mesurier at the farm here; and that her ladyship—she is pleasant enough as a rule, I know—won't quite stare poor Mrs. M. and the Miss Le Mesuriers into interesting specimens of native statuary."

"You are too stupid," pouted Tina. "Speak to him, Jeanne."

"I thought Jeanne was not to open her mouth!" said Louis; "but come, let us be serious; there are only a dozen we shall really care to ask," and Louis told off as many familiar names upon his fingers. But Tina shook her head.

"Not nearly enough, it will be no fun at all."

Louis looked at Jeanne, a little cloud was on his face.

"They are just our own friends, you see, Tina," Jeanne explained, "Louis's and mine. I don't think there are any others we should really care to ask; unless, that is," she added, as Tina's countenance fell, "there is anyone you would like particularly to come."

Tina's face, on which cloud and sunshine were given to chase one another as quickly as on an April day, brightened.

"Of course there is," she said quickly, with a little flush and laugh; "why, you said yourself one of them was very nice, Jeanne."

"I?" cried Jeanne, wondering, perplexed.

"Oh, Jeanne, you know you did! You said the other night Mr. Byng was very nice—for an Englishman."

"Did I?" laughed Jeanne; "well, I believe I did, and is it he you want asked?"

Tina stole a look at Louis, who was walking up and down the room.

"There were two of them, you know," she said simply.

Louis stayed in his walk. "You are never wanting those fellows at the barracks

asked!" he said sharply, looking from Jeanne to Tina. "Why, they are the merest strangers."

His dark eyes were flashing, he was twisting the end of his little black moustache quite viciously. He was not at all a bad-tempered young fellow, but he was feeling stung, more than disappointed, as was perhaps not very wonderful.

Tina was pouting, Jeanne's face reflected Louis's.

Just then the door opened, a white-coiffed, brown, wrinkled face, with dark eyes, appeared.

"What is it, Marie?" asked Jeanne.

"On demande voir M'sieu Louis," said Marie, nodding and smiling at the two girls.

She had a tray in her hand, on which were two little bits of pasteboard. She came up to where Louis was standing; two young men followed her into the room—they were Jeanne's Englishman and his friend, from the barracks.

On a sudden things had changed. Tina's pout had vanished, the sun shone once more. Even Louis, who could scarcely have cared so very much to see the two at that moment, cleared his brow and came briskly towards the new comers.

Jeanne smiled a kindly welcome.

"Find my aunt, and tell her these gentlemen are here," she said to Marie, who understood English well enough, and could speak it too when she chose, which certainly was not often.

"We found Colonel Le Quesne was not in," said the elder and bigger of the two young men, who was in fact Jeanne's Mr. Byng, "but we thought we might come in as we had the pleasure of meeting you and Mrs. Le Quesne the other evening."

"My aunt will be very glad to see you," said Jeanne with her pretty air of gracious self-possession.

Louis, who had too much of the Frenchman in him to be anything but polite, said something gracious too.

Tina, beside whom the other and younger man, whose name was Barry, had found a seat, gave her companion a mischievous look.

"You cannot say anything polite to me, you know," she said; "you did not know that I was here."

"Didn't I?" the young man answered. "What will you say when I tell you that I am one of those wonderful people who always know everything?"

Tina laughed. "How horrid! I am sure I sha'n't like you a bit."

"Oh yes, you will, when you know what a good fellow I am," said Mr. Barry.

He was a fair, good-looking young man; he spoke very slowly, and had a funny, solemn way with him; it was only his eyes that laughed.

"Well, since you are so clever, you can tell me what we were talking about as you came in," Tina said.

"You were talking about me, of course," said the young man readily.

Tina was delighted. "How conceited you all are," she cried; "I think you soldiers are the worst of all. Shall I tell you what we were saying?—no, you would never guess, not if you tried till you were a general."

"I should never guess it then," said George Barry; "generals are stupid old fogies who never guess anything, unless it's something you particularly don't want them to know. However, as I am not a general, nor ever likely to be one, I can guess this much—it was something very nice."

"It was nothing of the sort, unless you call not being asked to a picnic very nice?"

"Eh! no; I certainly should not call that very nice, if you were going to be there."

His companion looked across the big room to where Louis sat by Jeanne; he could not well leave her, for Mrs. Le Quesne had not yet appeared.

"I will tell you all about it," she said confidentially, as her gaze came back. "You see this day week is Jeanne's birthday, she will be eighteen"—young Barry nodded—"and we are to have a picnic."

"To which we are not to be asked; I see. Which of you is it will not have us? But, of course, it is you! I wonder you are not afraid to tell me! Supposing I were to swallow my sword, or do anything else equally desperate as soon as I get back to barracks, what would you do then?"

"Well, we certainly should not put off the picnic," said Tina, laughing.

For the first time, solemn-faced George Barry laughed too.

"No," he said, "I don't believe you would."

At that moment Mrs. Le Quesne entered the room. The young men hastily left their seats and went forward to meet her; the little tête-à-tête in the far-off corner came to an end.

Tina ran over to Jeanne's side. She took

the chair on which Mr. Byng had been sitting.

"I have told him all about it," she whispered hurriedly. "You must ask them now; do you hear, Jeanne?"

Jeanne smiled and nodded. Tina looked across to her late companion. He had seated himself by Mrs. Le Quesne's side, and with an air of having known her all his life, was chatting away to her in just the same funny, slow way, and with the same solemn look upon his face, as when he had talked to Tina. She, too, was evidently finding him amusing.

Mrs. Le Quesne was a little, fine-featured old lady, with keen dark eyes, and quick, bright, un-English ways, for strangely enough it was Louis, not Jeanne, whom she resembled. She was smiling now at something the young fellow was saying.

"What is this Mr. Barry is telling me about a picnic?" she called out to Louis; "why is he not to be asked? He tells me he is very unhappy about it, and does not think he can remain in the island."

Louis burst out laughing in spite of himself; then he had to explain.

"It is some of Barry's nonsense," Mr. Byng was saying to Jeanne, and then he too heard about the picnic.

"Well, I will invite you, Mr. Barry," said Mrs. Le Quesne, when the state of the case was made clear to her.

"And Byng?" said Mr. Barry plaintively; "I never go out without Byng."

"And Mr. Byng, of course, if he will be good enough to come."

Of course Mr. Byng declared himself delighted, and then came a discussion as to the whereabouts of the intended excursion. Spot after spot was suggested, canvassed, thrown aside.

"I tell you what," said George Barry, when at last the two rose to leave, "you think it over between this and, say Sunday, and Byng and I will walk over in the afternoon and hear what you have decided. You will let us come, won't you, Mrs. Le Quesne? You don't know what deadly work it is out at St. Peter's on a Sunday—nothing to do but to roam the happy valley and watch a lot of seedy-looking cabbages growing up into respectable, father-of-a-family walking-sticks."

"At least you could not see that everywhere," said Mrs. Le Quesne; "but since you are so tired of them, you may come over and look at the colonel's cabbages for a change; they, at any rate, are not so ambitious."

CHAPTER IV.

LONG before Sunday—on which day I need scarcely say the two friends once more found their way over to La Tourelle—an eligible spot for the picnic had been fixed upon. In due time came the day itself, Jeanne's birthday, the day on which she was to have nothing to do but to enjoy it.

Quite early in the morning Tina was at the manor-house enquiring for her friend. It was Marie to whom she addressed herself; Marie who did not seem at all pleased to see her just then; who indeed had come to look upon the young girl as an intruder altogether—a cuckoo in the nest of her own birdling. I am afraid she told a sad fib on the occasion.

"Mamzelle Jeanne is not yet risen," she said in her favourite "patois."

Tina knew well enough what the woman was saying; the unfriendly looks were not lost upon her. She laughed in Marie's brown face.

"You dreadful old story-teller," she said; "they are up and in the garden, both of them—your Mamzelle Jeanne and your M'sieu Louis, and I am going to them now."

Tina went dancing across the hall. Marie shook her coif at the gay retreating figure. Her black eyes shone. She went, grumbling to herself, back to her dining-room floor.

Tina found Jeanne and Louis in the garden together as she had said. They had been there for the last half-hour gathering Jeanne's birthday bouquet—it was Louis who did this—laughing, chattering, happy. To Jeanne it was the old times come back again. Even for Louis, I think, just then Tina had no existence.

But she was coming towards them now, gay, unconscious, smiling. The two went across the wet grass to meet her. Jeanne's dream was over. The same sun was shining, the same soft spring air came over the odorous flower-beds, the sound of murmuring waves still went on, but it was the past no longer; only Jeanne's birthday, as I have said; the day on which she was to have nothing to do but enjoy herself.

It was not such a very small party after all that gathered upon the St. Ouen sands. It took all the fingers of Jeanne's, Louis's, and Tina's hands to tell them over.

Marie was there, too, smiling and chattering, as her deft brown fingers busied themselves over baskets and hampers. But Marie's black eyes were not so entirely occupied over their work that she could not see what was taking place around her.

"No, the bon Dieu be praised, one could tell pretty well what was going on in the world, yet not have eyes in the back of one's head. It was but to use the eyes one had—and behold!"

I think on this occasion Marie's bright eyes saw even more than they cared for. Mamzelle Daunt and the young officer with the funny solemn air were evidently going to be inseparable, it is true; that was well enough. On the sands, while Marie unpacked the hampers and arranged the dinner; at the dinner itself, to which everyone brought such appetites; there they were still, side by side, laughing, talking, eating, no one could get a word with either—not even Louis, who at last gave up trying and perched himself on the most uncomfortable-looking piece of rock available, neither eating or speaking, only looking gloomily on. Marie did not pity him one bit.

If only Mamzelle Tina would never look at him again, that would be better still! It was only Jeanne who was sorry, who watched him with anxious wistful eyes, who would have made a place for him by her side. But Mr. Byng was on her other side, and Louis pretended not to see the invitation. Young Byng who could not but see what was going on, would have given a good deal for such kindly looks, but he knew that they were not for him.

After dinner it was just the same. The guests went off in little groups of twos and threes, some in this direction, some in that; and again it was Tina and young Barry, Jeanne and Mr. Byng, who were together. Louis disappeared altogether.

"Mind and don't go too far," the colonel called after the young people; "it is going to rain."

Clouds were already gathering. As the afternoon wore on there was less and less of blue sky to be seen. A cold mist was driving in. Before long sea and sky alike were blotted out. A heavy rain was falling, stragglers came hurrying up to the starting-place; there was shelter to be had close by while carriages were being got ready. Louis was one of the last to reappear, some of the party had already been got off. Mrs. Le Quesne came hurrying up to him fidgety, anxious.

"Where are Jeanne and Tina?" she cried; "have they not been with you?"

"Are they not here!" he cried, looking quickly round him, half frightened, wholly angry.

"They are with Mr. Byng and Mr. Barry," said a young man at his elbow.

"Some one said they had seen them on the rocks out there before this mist came on."

The speaker was a stranger to the island. Louis turned sharply round on him.

"Mon Dieu!" he cried, "do you know what you are saying? Out there in this mist and the tide running in!"

It was coming in, fast and strong. The spray was already driving in their faces. Mrs. Le Quesne was crying; Marie, with chattering teeth, was calling on every one to save "la p'tite"—her Mamzelle Jeanne. It was Jeanne these two were thinking of; I am afraid in their sudden trouble the little English girl was almost forgotten.

"Hush!" said Louis sharply, "I am going!"

But where? Before him the sea and the blinding mist—he could do nothing there; behind him the cliffs, from their summit he might catch a sight of them somewhere. There was nothing else to be done. Tina was certainly not forgotten by him, and yet one day—many days after—it came back to him that it was Jeanne's name that he had kept repeating to himself, as he ran and stumbled up the steep cliff's side. At the top he stood still a moment, waiting to get back his breath; not knowing in truth what was to be done next. The mist was around him here, the rain beat in his face and almost blinded him. He could scarcely tell sea from land. If the missing ones had got out to the rocks, as that stranger fellow had said, no one, nothing could save them. As he recognised all the horror and his helplessness, the young fellow groaned aloud. If there had been but something he could do! Presently he started, then gave a shout to those below. A girlish laugh had caught his ear; a minute more, and two figures, drenched and forlorn-looking, were almost upon him. They were Tina and Mr. Barry. Tina was laughing and talking as though she had never left off. The rain had at any rate not spoilt her pleasure. Louis's heart gave a great thankful throb as he recognised them.

"Where is Jeanne?" he cried; "a nice fright you have given us!"

"Jeanne is safe enough," said Tina mischievously; "Mr. Byng is taking care of her. Come, Mr. Barry," she cried over her shoulder, "I must run on, I am wet through."

George Barry lingered behind a moment.

"Byng and Miss Dumaresque are close behind," he said politely. "We have been

over the old church and manor-house, and waited, hoping it might clear."

Then the young man hastened on. Louis made no attempt to follow; he was not intending to wait for the others either. At Tina's words all his anger had come back.

As he stood halting, irresolute, the two came hurrying up. Yes, he was angry enough, but somehow at the sight of Jeanne, pale, drenched with rain, but safe, his anger melted. As he met her clear, tender gaze his own softened.

"You are wet through, Jeanne," he said anxiously; "if you are not too tired you had better walk home with me, it will be far safer."

"I am not a bit too tired," Jeanne declared.

Louis turned to Byng. He was feeling quite amiable, even to him.

"Will you mind telling my aunt that my cousin is walking home with me," he said. "The distance is nothing; most of the people are from our neighbourhood; if you can get the wettest of them to walk too, do, there's a good fellow."

The good fellow, thus dismissed, could not very well decline the mission, but his honest face clouded not a little. It was with reluctant eyes he bade Jeanne good-bye.

Louis drew her hand in his; all his bad temper was flown, his brightness had come back.

"What a failure it has been!" he said quite cheerfully.

"Oh, I hope not!" said Jeanne. "It is, of course, an unfortunate ending; but for that, I think they have all enjoyed it."

"Have you?" asked Louis quickly, in his voice a jealous throb; "it was your picnic—you were to, you know."

"Was I?" Jeanne said with a little sigh. "Yes, I remember; yes, it has been pleasant enough, but, somehow, I think the old birthdays were the best."

CHAPTER V.

TINA was gone, the little island knew her no more. There had been, I need scarcely say, many protestations of love and faithfulness between the young lovers; and when it came to saying good-bye to Jeanne, Tina's tears had flowed freely.

"They are not for you, Louis," she had cried out, laughing in the midst of them; "it is Jeanne that I cannot bear to leave." But, by the time the pier at St. Heliers was reached, her good spirits had come back, and at the last she stood smiling on the

vessel's deck, waving her hands gaily and crying "abitôt"—the only bit of "patois" she was carrying away with her—to Louis, standing with wistful eyes upon the shore.

After this, perhaps, you think that things went on in their old groove at La Tourelle. How this might have been under other and happier circumstances, I cannot tell; but, as it was, poor Jeanne fell ill. She had not been quite her old self for some time past; the thorough wetting on the day of the picnic had done its work. Before Tina had been gone a week her friend lay delirious, in the clutches of fever. What hearts ached in the old house, as the weary days went by! Louis wandered all day about the garden, or down by the shore, never beyond call. They told him his name was ever on Jeanne's lips. One day they let him see her, but she did not recognise her old companion, and went on still crying out his name. Louis was broken-hearted, her voice stabbed him to the quick. Tina's letters, that at first came regularly enough, brought him no comfort. As time went on they came less and less regularly, and at last not at all. It scarcely seemed to trouble him. Jeanne was getting better then, all danger was past, there was nothing for her to do but to get well again as fast as possible. It seemed to Louis that nothing could ever trouble him any more.

One morning towards noon, as he was waiting for her in the garden, where she came now every day, he saw Marie coming towards him; it was mail-day, and she had a letter in her hand. Somehow Louis knew at once from whom it was. He took a turn or two about the garden before he opened it. When at last he did so, this is what he read:

"MY DEAR LOUIS,—I wonder if you are very angry with me. It is a long time since I wrote, and I do not think I should be writing now, but there is something I want to tell you. I still think you are the dearest boy in the world, but I am afraid we do not love one another as people do who wish to live together all their lives. I, at least, could never live all my life in your little island of which you are so fond. It is pretty enough, but it is so small—the sound of the sea is never out of one's ears, and one sees the same faces always, always. I am fond of change, and I want to see the world. There is some one here—he is ever so old, and I have known him all my life—he is for ever travelling, here, there, and everywhere. He has asked me to go with him, and I have said 'Yes.' Can you

forgive me! I give you back to Jeanne, dear little Jeanne, who loves you, who has loved you all her life. In your last you told me she was getting better every day; by this time she should be quite well. Give her my dear, dear love. I shall never see her again, but I shall never forget her—never.—Your affectionate friend,

“TINA.”

The blow had fallen at last. As Louis read the careless little missive that seemed so like Tina herself, his face flushed, his hands were trembling. A knowledge that he ought to be feeling very miserable, mingled with a strange sort of consciousness that he was feeling nothing of the sort, possessed him. Instead, something was crying out within him that he was free. Free! and Jeanne loved him—had loved him always. Was it so? If only it were true! He raised his eyes, and saw her coming towards him, pale, fragile still, but the old sweet smile upon her face. He went hastily to meet her.

“Come,” he said, “your seat is ready waiting for you, and I have something to tell you.” She saw the letter in his hand, and looked at him with kind, enquiring eyes. “Yes,” he said, “it is from her—from Tina. Cannot you guess what it is she has written to tell me at last?”

He had seated himself by Jeanne’s side; he had caught one of her white trembling hands in his.

“Oh, Jeanne!” he cried, “cannot you guess it all? She cares for me no longer, and I—it was a dream, a fever—I am free!”

When Mrs. Le Quesne came some half-hour later to look for Jeanne, she saw at once what had happened. She sent Jeanne off to her sofa, to beef-tea—goodness knows what.

“Do you want her to have another fever?” she said to Louis. Then she went and found the colonel. “It has all come right,” she cried, between tears and laughter; “it is ‘la p’tite’ who will come into my old shoes, after all.”

Marie, of course, soon knew all about it. She could scarcely contain herself; she scolded Louis, she petted “la p’tite”; she triumphed over the absent “Mamzelle Tina”—Tina, who would only have laughed could she have heard her.

“What will Mr. Byng say when he comes to hear?” Marie said to her mistress; “the poor young man who came every day to enquire after Mamzelle Jeanne, when she lay at death’s door.”

For myself, I do not know what Mr. Byng

said. I only know that he shortly went away on leave. It was getting autumn then; it was winter before he came back. George Barry had got leave too; it was he who came alone to La Tourelle on their return, and took back a piece of wedding-cake “for Byng to sleep upon.”

A DANGEROUS SECRET.

By W. W. FENN

CHAPTER I.

LET the first letter which Mr. Derrick Smith, artist, wrote from Rome to his friend Swainson, begin this story.

“129, Via Babuino, Piano, 4, Rome,
“April 11th, 1878.

“MY DEAR SWAINSON,—I carried out my plan of travel as I told you I should, and at six-thirty on Sunday morning I found myself at the railway terminus here, rather tired, and glad it was over. The run was very continuous and fatiguing, as, with the exception of an hour at Paris, there was hardly time to get food at any of the halting-places. But from London to Rome in less than four days is sharp work, and such a journey cannot be performed without a certain amount of inconvenience. At Dover I met two men I knew, and travelled with them as far as Dijon, where, after dinner, we parted, they going on an Easter holiday excursion to the Cornice, and I down south. I also found a companion who was coming straight through, an Irishman and a very pleasant fellow, and as it turned out, I was glad to have had his company, inasmuch as it lessened to some extent my personal apprehensions during a bad quarter of an hour which I experienced in the train between here and Florence.

“I will describe it as clearly as I can, particularly as I cannot help fancying it may have some bearing, direct or indirect, upon the little commission which I undertook to execute for you. Perhaps I am even wrong in telling you about it, for fear it should unnecessarily disturb you. Moreover, nothing has come of it as yet, nor will anything, I dare say, only there are one or two circumstances, as you will see, connected with it, which appear to justify my suspicions. You will know whether aught exists in reference to your acquaintance with the lady, which would give my idea any reasonable ground to stand upon. For the present, rest content in the assurance that I have the packet of letters quite safe

under lock and key, and that they shall be delivered into the hands of their owner as soon as she shall arrive in Rome, or at least on the very first opportunity I have of giving them to her unobserved.

"We left Florence by the mail-train at ten on Saturday night, in a first-class carriage; four passengers — an Italian lady and gentleman, the Irishman aforesaid, and myself. All soon fell asleep, until about midnight, being slightly disturbed by a stoppage, I drowsily observed that the Italians got out, and I fancied that my companion and I were left alone to continue our repose, which we did. In about an hour I awoke, and to my surprise saw, sitting in the corner at the farther end of the seat opposite to me, a man whom I certainly had never observed get in. The thin blue silk blind was drawn across the lamp in the roof of the carriage, but there was sufficient light for me to see that he was a rough-looking customer—rough, that is, as far as his dress was concerned, which was that of an Italian peasant, with broad-brimmed, high-peaked hat, etc. But a second and more scrutinising glance, which I took without moving, showed me that his face and hands were not quite in accord with his garments; the former being refined, with a finely-chiselled nose and chin, whilst the latter were white and delicate, with long, sinewy, taper-tipped fingers.

"Although somewhat disturbed by this apparition, I, fortunately, was still too drowsy to rouse up thoroughly, so I lay stretched out along the seat as I was, contemplating him for a minute or two. As I did so, it seemed that his face was not altogether unfamiliar to me, though the broad brim of his hat threw his brow and eyes into such deep shadow that I could not discern them distinctly, and thus at first it was only an impression which he gave me of somebody whom I must have recently met.

"Presently he advanced one foot slowly towards the seat opposite to him, as if feeling beneath it, but touching nothing there, he dropped on his knees, and peeped under the valance. Still finding the space empty, he resumed his place, and gazed curiously at our two tranquil forms, apparently apprehensive lest either of us might have observed his action. Concluding, doubtless, that we were both fast asleep—for the shadow from my hat hid my eyes from him, just as his were hidden from me—he seemed reassured, and then stooped down to look beneath his own seat.

"Naturally rendered suspicious by all this, I debated what to do, and although I thought two need not be afraid of one, it occurred to me that he might have a knife about him, and be up to a brigandish trick or two, and that it would be better to arrive sound in Rome than be in any way maimed through a scuffle; so I decided not to arouse my friend, but to remain quiet for a while, and pretend for a little longer to be asleep. I assure you it was no fun to be thus lying and watching the fellow, and my sensations were anything but agreeable when I saw him suddenly slip at full length upon the floor, and in the most marvellously serpent-like manner, glide beneath the seat opposite to me, on which my friend was asleep. He was then quite out of sight, and remained so for several minutes. But presently out came a hand and arm very gently from under the valance, straight in the direction of my small hand-bag which was standing on the floor close beside me.

"Now I may as well tell you, that in that bag were the precious documents which you had entrusted to me. I had transferred them from my breast-pocket to the hand-bag whilst I was dining in the station restaurant at Dijon. The place was very crowded and full of bustle, and I noticed, more than once, a tall gentlemanly-looking man of Italian aspect, rather seedily dressed, standing near the buffet, and eyeing me keenly. My attention was particularly drawn to him by the way in which he always appeared to be watching me, whenever I looked up. Our eyes met constantly, but directly he saw that I saw him he would drop his, and I wondered who the deuce he could be, and what his motive for staring so was. All on a sudden, by a flash of intuition, I recalled this circumstance, directly that hand and arm were stretched out towards the bag, and I knew, in an instant, of whom the face of our mysterious fellow-traveller reminded me. It was the man who had been watching me the day before at Dijon! Differently dressed—disguised, indeed, as he now was, I felt sure it was the same person, and I also felt sure that it was this bag which he was especially coveting. I do not know why I conceived all this, or why I attributed so much importance to it, but these are the little facts which gave me an idea that they may not be unconnected with you and the packet. But to proceed with my story.

"Just as the fellow's hand was within an inch of the bag, and I was about to move

it out of his reach, the engine-whistle warned us that we were approaching a station, and never did any sound bring such relief to my mind before. Needless to say the arm disappeared in a second, and needless to say that I then gently woke my Irish friend, and told him in a whisper what was up, but to lie quite still until we stopped, when we would give the alarm, and have the intruder removed.

"The station proved to be Chiusi, and the scene which followed, with the guards, porters, and people, was highly diverting. Directly I mentioned the fact that a probable thief was lying concealed beneath the seat to the two gendarmes, who, as you know, are always so officious at these stations, they pounced in upon him like a couple of terriers upon a rat in a hole. They dragged him out savagely by the heels, and he was immediately searched, but as he had taken nothing belonging to us, we were relieved from all further concern with the affair, and the culprit was marched off in custody.

"The guard of the train remarked that, in all probability, he had peeped in through the windows on the further side of the carriage at the last halting-place, and that, seeing we were asleep, he had crept softly in at the unlocked door, just as the train was starting. 'These contadini are always hanging about the stations,' said the official, 'ready to lay hands on any portable articles within reach. Madonna! but this was a bold attempt, and it will cost the fellow dear.'

"Yes, I thought, as I meditated on the adventure during the remainder of my journey, and it might have cost me dear, had I not awoke, or had I been alone, or, indeed, had many other things occurred which did not occur. As it was, we were well out of the business, and I really should have thought no more of it, but for the strange resemblance between the two faces of the men. This, in fact, might hardly have struck me, but for the odd association which it seemed to have with your commission, for I gleaned something, when you gave me the packet, which set me thinking that there might be a third party mixed up in the affair. If I am right, I still cannot get it out of my head that this same third party was none other than the Italian at Dijon, or the fellow in the railway-carriage, or both.

When the fellow was examined by the gendarmes on the platform, it was more than ever evident to me that his dress was a disguise—he was no contadino. The

rough, brown, soiled coat and baggy trousers concealed that beneath which was no more en suite with them than were the face and hands of the wearer. Whether this fact led to anything, or was even noticed by the officials at the time, I do not know. I noticed it. This scratch will give you a fair idea of the fellow's head."

Having read thus far in his friend's letter, Henry Swainson paused, and closely examined the rough but clever sketch in pen and ink of the head of a handsome Italian of about five-and-thirty, which occupied the opposite page of the paper. Presently he let it fall on the table by which he was sitting, and rising, began to pace the room as he muttered to himself, "Caldini, without a doubt! He saw me give Smith that blue envelope on the steps of the club, when he followed me there that night, and knew what was in it. One's only hope lies in his being laid by the heels by the law. If he is not, he will follow up those letters like a sleuth-hound, and I shall not know a moment's peace until I am assured they are in the poor lady's hands."

CHAPTER II.

YEARS before we see Mr. Henry Swainson engrossed by this letter, and whilst he was reading for the bar, he would, like most young men, occasionally vary the monotony of his studies of an evening by looking in at the various entertainments of the town. He was a steady worker, but he gave himself reasonable relaxation, and having a nice musical taste he naturally frequented such places as afforded him the most gratification in this direction. But he did not limit his search after melody to the more fashionable quarters. He was fond of seeing life and studying character, and being somewhat of a speculative and philosophical turn of mind, he enjoyed watching audiences of every degree, almost as much as he did listening to performances. In this way it came about that one evening he strolled off to a music-hall in a Northern suburb, an advertisement of which had caught his eye. He seldom found himself bored after the fashion of our modern youth, and was always disposed to take a kindly view of mankind, so that on this occasion, if he did not expect to reap much musical pleasure, he knew he should find enough to satisfy his propensity for observing men and manners. To his intense surprise, however, he enjoyed a great musical treat. A very charming-

looking young lady, described in the programme as La Signorina Julia Terasco, "The Queen of Song," quite startled him by her talent. He was immediately struck by the very superior excellence of the young singer, and he felt amazed that so fine and promising an artist should not have been snapped up by some manager in a higher sphere. After listening to her with infinite delight, he determined to pay a second visit to the establishment, and having had his first impressions confirmed he began to talk about her to one of his friends at the Wits' Club. This was a man considerably older than Swainson, but notable as being one of the best musical critics of the day, and on this ground their club acquaintanceship had ripened into a strong friendship. Sir Charles Vandellan knew everybody, as the phrase goes; but being a bachelor, and a baronet of limited means, and having generally artistic tastes, he affected the slightly Bohemian society to be found at the "Wits'," almost in preference to that which his social position opened to him.

"You must come and hear her, Sir Charles," said Swainson to him after he had critically described the singer. "If I know anything about music, I have found a real prize. It's rather a long way to go, but you will find her well worth the journey. Say now, will you come to-night?"

But Sir Charles was engaged that evening, and for several following, and when at length the visit came off, to their infinite disappointment the Signorina Julia Terasco was not singing. Indeed she never sang in public again. Thus Swainson only saw and heard her twice.

Being called to the bar shortly after this, and going to India to practise, the Signorina Julia Terasco soon faded from his memory, and eight years elapsed before anything happened to recall her.

"Hallo, Swainson, how long have you been back? I thought you were in India!"

"So I was six weeks ago, and for some things I wish I was there now. This English climate hasn't improved since I have been away. It is confoundedly chilly for June, surely? I have not felt so cold for eight years, I think, as I do to-day."

"Have you been away eight years? Bless my soul! I could not have believed it. How the time passes! But you are not a bit altered, my dear fellow; you

look uncommonly well, to be sure. You wear better than many of us, I'll be hanged if you don't. By the way, I'll tell you another man I saw in the club to-day, whom I haven't seen for years, and who seems to wear equally well—old Sir Charles Vandellan; he has not turned up here for ages. I don't know how long it is since I saw him, and he looks as young as ever and as fit as a fiddle, just as you do. I wonder how you fellows manage it; I wish you would pass on the receipt."

"Oh, is Sir Charles in town? I should like to see him again. Somebody told me he had come into some property, and had altogether retired from London life. Lives far away in the country or somewhere—quite out of the world. It must be a great change for him with his tastes."

"Go and ask him how he likes it—see, there he is now, going into the coffee-room. He'll be glad to see you, no doubt. You used to be great cronies at one time—as fond of music as ever, Swainson?"

But Henry Swainson did not stop to answer this last enquiry, made by one of the numerous acquaintances whom he came across on his first visit to the Wits' Club a few days after his temporary return to England.

Far more cordial than any of the recognitions he had so far received at this old haunt was that accorded to him by the hale, fresh-coloured, aristocratic-looking gentleman, whom he now followed into the coffee-room.

"Swainson, I am delighted to meet you," said Sir Charles. "This is most fortunate. I am seldom in London now—never for more than a day or two at a time, and I am very glad to have come at the moment of your return. I hope I shall see something of you during your stay. You must spare me a few days down at my little place near Malvern. I have turned Benedick since you went away, and I shall be charmed to present you."

The Indian barrister's response to this greeting was equally hearty, and the result of that afternoon's chat was an agreement that he should pay his old friend a short visit in the course of the following week.

The residence of Sir Charles Vandellan was a delightfully-situated villa in the neighbourhood of Malvern Wells, and was looking, together with its surroundings, at its very best on the sunny June afternoon when Mr. Swainson drove in at the gates in the little T-cart in which his host had

been over to the station to fetch him. As they alighted, the sound of a woman's voice singing at a piano came softly through the French window of the drawing-room, which opened upon an ample lawn and flower-garden at the side of the house.

"Ah," said Sir Charles, "there is Lady Vandellan contending with the nightingales, as usual. Come round this way, and you will hear that my account of her is not exaggerated."

The two friends passed on by a path leading from the drive among the rhododendrons, and stood for a while at a favourable point listening to the enchanting strains of Haydn's old canzonet, "My mother bids me bind my hair," as they were poured out with exquisite charm by the singer. Whilst Swainson thus remained his host bent upon him a keen glance, as if to observe the effect the song should produce. When it was over, he said, gently rubbing his hands with an air of profound satisfaction:

"There, I don't think you ever heard that better sung or with more taste and refinement. What a fortune she would have made on the stage, or in the concert-room—eh? But for my own good luck in finding such a treasure I could almost wish for the sake of art she had been obliged to earn her own living; she is a real loss to the profession."

"Indeed, yes," replied Swainson in rather an absent manner; "it was quite perfect—quite."

They were about to move forward when the voice again burst forth, this time in the execution of a series of brilliant roulades, entirely overwhelming in their volume and the certainty and correctness of their tone.

"Stay," whispered Swainson, "pray let me listen. It is magnificent;" and he stood for several minutes with his head thrown a little on one side, looking gravely delighted and completely absorbed.

"Now, come along," said Sir Charles at length, when there was another pause in the music, "and let me introduce you."

With this they emerged from their hiding-place, crossed the lawn, and entered the room by the open window.

The lady immediately rose from the piano, and coming forward, shook hands with the guest with every appropriate expression of hospitality. She was a tall and graceful woman, a little past her first youth perhaps, but only so much so as to

lend to her slender figure that roundness of matronhood which told you that in this respect at least she could never have looked better. In her face alone were there any hints of the advance of time, but being olive-skinned and dark, the practised eye would detect that these were due more to her complexion and peculiar style of beauty than to actual years; she probably looked older than she really was. If, in addition, there lingered traces of some bygone care and suffering, the bright smile displaying a set of pearly teeth, and the soft lustre of the long-lashed eyes, assured Swainson confidently that she was thoroughly happy in the present. Her features were just sufficiently clear of the sculptor's or painter's ideal of perfection of form and proportion, to give to her countenance that charm which ordinary mortals find more attractive. It made her, in fact, an extremely pretty, rather than a very beautiful woman, and her speaking voice being equally melodious with that of her singing, Swainson felt that to live in her company would be, as it were, to live always in "a concord of sweet sounds."

Knowing her husband's passionate love for music, he could well understand how such a being might very easily have turned him from what his friends had looked upon as a confirmed bachelorhood. But he found himself irresistibly wondering, throughout the first five minutes of conventional talk, where Sir Charles could have discovered a person apparently so peculiarly suited to his tastes. Not that this wonder was exactly born of his introduction to the lady—it was only increased by that, for the rapturous way in which Sir Charles had spoken of his wife to his friend, and had yet said never a word as to where he met her, had set Swainson speculating upon this point from the first.

"Sir Charles tells me you are as great a musical fanatic as he is, Mr. Swainson," said Lady Vandellan, as, later on, the three were sitting down to dinner, "so I hope at least you will not find us too dull for you here. We are a most domestic pair, I assure you, and see very few people. Nor, I am afraid, can we offer you any sport. I believe there is some fishing to be had not far——"

"Oh, thanks," replied the guest, "I am no sportsman. My only hobby, besides music, is drawing a little, but when I can get music in such perfection as I shall here, I could never find the country dull."

"You are very good to say so."

"I am perfectly sincere, I assure you. From what I heard this afternoon, I am confident one does not hear often in society such a voice and such musical ability as yours, Lady Vandellan. You can scarcely be called an amateur. You must have worked very hard to have done such complete justice to your rare gifts, or, may I say, genius?"

The hostess blushed as, dropping her eyes, she said indifferently:

"Oh yes, of course, when one has strong love for an art one naturally works hard at it."

"I am afraid not always, Lady Vandellan. It does not follow, unless one is obliged for some reason. You have studied in Italy, I imagine; you could scarcely have acquired your fine style in England."

The blush deepened, and the lady still kept her gaze averted from Swainson's face, as Sir Charles, answering hastily for her, said:

"Yes; but not since she was a child—not since she was a child."

The conversation on this subject then dropped suddenly, as if by common consent, and Swainson could not help feeling that the early studies of his hostess were not to be enquired into. Intuitively he felt he had been approaching forbidden ground, and this idea was increased by that marked absence of any reference made by Sir Charles to his wife's early days or his first acquaintance with her.

"It is no affair of mine, after all," thought the young barrister; "why should I bother myself about it?"

And yet throughout the whole of dinner he found he was bothering himself about it, and by degrees a strange sensation crept over him, as he grew more familiar with Lady Vandellan's appearance, that, in some way or other, it was an affair of his, or one at least in which he had some interest.

"Had he ever seen her before?"

That was a question which at last kept perpetually presenting itself to him, and finally, as from time to time he looked at her, he answered it in the affirmative. But where? For the life of him he could not imagine. The first notes of her voice, as he heard them through the open window, had seemed to remind him, in their exquisite quality, not exactly of a voice he remembered so much as of a person, an appearance he remembered. And now was this the person? Was this the appearance of which the tones of that voice had reminded him? He thought it was. Putting these

two sensations together so preoccupied him that he was by no means so conversational during dinner as he might have been. On the whole, the meal was rather dull, and it was not until they were all three in the drawing-room again, and Lady Vandellan at Swainson's request sat down at the piano, and music was again in the ascendant, that anything like vivacity returned.

She continued singing for a considerable time, whilst Swainson and his host sat in rapt enjoyment, the latter ever and anon by glance or brief remark appealing to the former (who never took his eyes off the singer) for confirmation of the praises he was for ever bestowing on his wife.

"Do you ever sing 'Ah, non Credea,' from 'La Sonnambula'?" presently asked the guest during a pause.

"Yes," was the brief reply; "would you like to hear it?" and the lady sang the song forthwith. Whilst she was doing so, Sir Charles walked to the open window and stood with his back to the room, looking out into the summer night. At the conclusion of the music he gently clapped his hands and murmured "Brava, brava!" but without turning round. Swainson had gone up to the piano, and as the last notes died away he joined in the applause, and said, with some significance:

"I have not heard that for years, and I never heard it sung so well before, but once."

"Ah," said Lady Vandellan, "and by whom was it sung? I hope it does not revive any tender memories, Mr. Swainson," she added, half laughing, but without looking up, for he had spoken almost in a whisper which might have sounded pathetic to her unsuspecting ears.

"No, indeed," he replied slowly; "no tender memories, Lady Vandellan—only rather strange ones."

She stole a quick glance up at him for a moment as she still toyed with the keys, and said: "How so?"

"Well, I remember hearing that song sung at a strange place; I mean it was strange that one should have heard the song so well sung as it was there."

"And who was the singer?" was the nervous enquiry through the running accompaniment she continued playing.

"Oh, no one you ever heard of," said Swainson carelessly, but not loudly; "no one anybody ever heard much of. She was called, I think, Julia Terasco."

Lady Vandellan ceased playing with her left hand, and raising it nervously to her lips as she turned a deadly pale face up to Swainson, said in a terrified whisper: "For Heaven's sake, Mr. Swainson, never mention that name here."

At that moment Sir Charles strolled back from the window; his wife resumed her idle practice on the instrument; and the guest making some commonplace remark aloud, flung himself into an easy-chair as he muttered beneath his breath: "By Jove, I was right!"

It was not until the forenoon of the next day was well advanced that Henry Swainson chanced to be left alone with Lady Vandellan. He had been much perturbed in mind and spirit since the suspicions which were gradually aroused in him whilst he sat watching and listening to his fair hostess the previous evening, had been confirmed by the mention of the name of Julia Terasco.

Had Lady Vandellan concealed from her husband the fact that she had once been a public singer? or was she merely anxious to warn her guest from reverting to a subject which it was desirable on all accounts should be forgotten? Her alarm at the discovery he had made, inclined him, much against his wish, to believe that the first was the correct one, but then the absence of any attempt on her part to deny her identity, although she had of course not actually admitted it, argued in favour of the second; and this he most fervently hoped, for her own sake, as well as for Sir Charles's, would prove to be the case. But after he had tormented himself for the best part of the night by trying to arrive at a definite conclusion, he gave up the attempt, and determined to wait until he should have an opportunity of getting some explanation from the lady herself.

In the morning he thought he observed in her an anxiety equal to his own for an occasion on which she might give it him, and when at length it came she lost not a moment in taking advantage of it.

They were strolling about the sweet-smelling garden, and Sir Charles having something to look after in the stables, left his wife and friend together.

"I hardly know," she began, directly her husband was gone, "I hardly know how to speak to you, Mr. Swainson, on what I am sure must have troubled you as much as it has me. But since you have discovered

my unhappy secret, I feel there is only one course left to me—I must trust you. It is my only hope, for if I do not you will think worse of me than perhaps you do now, and I shall be in greater danger than I am at present. In fact, my only safety seems to be in my appealing to you, for sheer pity's sake, not to betray me."

Swainson felt grieved to the heart at these words, for he saw they meant that his old friend knew nothing of his wife's antecedents.

"Sir Charles," he said, "is not aware then that you were once——"

"No, no," she continued, "of course not, of course not. Alas! what would I give that I had not been so misguided, so weak, so wicked. But, Mr. Swainson, if I have no right to ask you to be my friend, under the circumstances and after so short an acquaintance; if I am unable to make you one, I appeal to you as Sir Charles's friend. Do not—if you value his peace of mind—do not, please, deceive him. It can do no good now. It is too late, and we are so happy—he is so happy—do not disturb our peace."

She said this with such an appealing look in her beautiful eyes, that Swainson was touched to the quick as he responded:

"Pray, Lady Vandellan, do not misunderstand me. I am not an ogre of such rigid and strict views as to be deaf to reason or to an honest appeal."

"I do not misunderstand you, I think," said she, "otherwise I should not dare to talk to you as I am doing. Your face, and the expression it wore last night—the delicate way in which you hinted that you recognised me—told me, as your manner does now, that I may trust you."

"You may," he said candidly.

"And I will," she replied. "When Sir Charles asked me to marry him I was so overwhelmed, so overjoyed, that I did not stop to think. I accepted him on the instant, before I could realise the wrong I was doing him in consenting to become his wife without telling him the whole of my early career. When I had once consented, I had not the courage to jeopardise the happiness he offered me by risking a revelation which might mar it; for I had learned to understand how sensitive his nature is, and how he hated the idea of a public life for women. I know now how wrong I was to withhold the truth from him. But, as I say, I had not the courage, although many times I have trembled at the thought of being discovered; yet I

have calmed my anxieties by remembering how very remote the chance of such a thing was. Living the retired life we have done for the last four years—ever since we were married, indeed—it began to seem impossible that anyone would ever know me."

Lady Vandellan paused, and then added with a sigh of the deepest distress :

"Oh, Mr. Swainson, to think that you, Sir Charles's friend, should have been the first to penetrate the truth !"

"Better a friend than an enemy," said the young barrister cheerfully, "unless he happened to be what is called a 'good-natured friend.' Pray, Lady Vandellan, make your mind easy," he continued seriously ; "have no fear. I see Sir Charles returning across the paddock. You may rely on my discretion, I give you my word. Shall we walk towards him ?"

Time passed. By April in the following year, Swainson's stay in England was coming to an end. He had written to tell the Vandellans that he feared he should not have time to run down to Malvern to say good-bye before he returned to India, when a letter in reply told him they would be passing through town on their way to Rome, and that they hoped they might see him for a moment then.

"All roads lead to Rome, and everybody seems to be going to Rome this spring," said Swainson a day or two afterwards to his friend Derrick Smith, as they met in the smoking-room of the Wits' Club ; "and so you are off there with easel and palette, are you, Smith ?"

"Yes," replied the artist, "to-morrow night—I go slick through without stopping. Can I do anything for you there ?"

"Thanks, no. Our friend, Sir Charles Vandellan, is going soon. You know him, don't you ?"

"No," said Smith, "not personally. I know he is a member of the club, but he never comes here."

"Very seldom. He is not often in town. Well, I am afraid I shall not see you again, old fellow, but you might drop me a line. I must go and write some letters now, so good luck to you, and good-bye," and Swainson strolled home to his lodgings in Duke Street.

The clock at St. James's Palace had just struck nine as he let himself in with his latch-key. To his surprise he was met in the hall by a servant, who informed

him that there was a lady in his room waiting to see him.

"She has been here an hour, sir," said the man, "and it is most important, she declares."

Before the barrister had time almost to wonder who it could be, he found himself in the presence of Lady Vandellan.

CHAPTER III.

No beautiful or accomplished woman reaches the age of thirty, without having passed through some more or less serious affairs of the heart, especially if she be an heiress in her own right.

Juliet Mayne was no exception to this rule. She was barely twenty-one when her father died, and she found herself the possessor of an income of nearly three thousand a year, a fortune which came to her from her mother's side, and in which Lionel Mayne, Esq., her father, had only had a life-interest. When a young man of limited means, and, as his friends had decided, of idle habits, he had dabbled in art. Finding his way to Rome for the furtherance of what he was pleased to call his studies, he fell naturally into the easy-going Bohemian life prevailing in the Eternal City. Coming of a good Roman Catholic family, and being extremely handsome, he had no difficulty in entering the best society. There he met his fate in the person of a wealthy and charming young Italian girl of noble birth. A marriage was arranged with the consent of all parties, and if his friends at the Café Greco cordially and sincerely congratulated him on his good fortune, they did so with an honest regret that it would deprive them of his society ; for my gentleman no sooner found himself deeply in love, and relieved of all petty anxieties, than he determined to abandon art, and lead the life of an English country gentleman.

Thus it came to pass that for several years he resided in one of the hunting counties of his native land, with his young Italian bride. But although her resources were ample, and arrived with the utmost regularity from the family estate near Tivoli, they were insufficient to meet the extravagant outlay in which her lord and master indulged. It was fortunate for the poor lady that he could lay no hand upon the capital (that matter had been carefully arranged by deed of settlement, etc.), or he would soon have brought himself back to his old impecunious condition. As it was, they had simply to retrench, but as

he refused to do this in the face of his county acquaintances, they repaired to London, where, not long afterwards, his now neglected wife died, leaving a little girl of seven, the only offspring of the marriage, to the tender mercies of her shiftless, selfish, but not unkind father.

Handsome as was the income he derived from his life-interest in the little Juliet's property, he by no means spent as much of it as he ought on the child's general education; and when it was discovered that she was developing a magnificent soprano voice, and was promising to become a very beautiful woman, he secretly determined that she should adopt the stage as a profession. With this intention, therefore, when she was about sixteen, he took her to Italy, and for a while placed her under the best masters.

It was during this period that a certain Giovanni Caldini, a tenor singer of some repute, first made her acquaintance. He held a prominent position in the Theatre of La Scala at Milan, was an extremely clever and versatile actor, combining, with a fair voice, qualities as a gymnast and pantomimist which alone would have made him celebrated.

He bore, however, but a very indifferent character, and his notorious gallantries had, on more than one occasion, brought him into evil prominence before the not very squeamish public of the northern capital.

Mr. Lionel Mayne, although supposed to be residing in Milan, as the legitimate guardian of his young daughter, gave but little heed to her private pursuits. Assiduous always in his attention to everything which related to her studies, he nevertheless neglected her in all other respects, and it was only after many warnings, anonymous and otherwise, that he condescended to exercise his parental authority, and put a stop to the rather compromising acquaintance which had sprung up between Juliet and the notorious Signor Caldini. But he was too late, the affair had gone too far. Unwise and ill-judging in this, as in most matters, he took such violent measures in his efforts to terminate the acquaintance, that one fine morning he suddenly discovered to his dismay that his authority had been set at defiance, and that his daughter had fled, no one knew whither; but as Signor Giovanni Caldini simultaneously disappeared, and broke his engagement at the theatre, it was fairly assumed that the two had departed together.

Overwhelmed with remorse, not unmingled with chagrin, Lionel Mayne became a broken-down man.

He wandered half over Europe in search of the fugitives, but could never obtain a clue to more than one of them—his daughter (of the man he heard nothing)—yet on her track he always came too late, until finally, after two years' vain search, he found her alone in London, earning her living, under the name of Julia Terasco, by singing at a music-hall. Much as appearances had been against her, she had never lost her right to her parent's love and respect. In truth, she had not even left Milan in company with Caldini, although she had appointed to meet him in Paris, which she did, but only to leave him again within a few hours. Taking advantage of the young girl's terror at her father's violence, her lover had found little difficulty in persuading her to this step, under the assurance that when in the French capital she should become his wife. Once there, however, he showed himself in his true colours, and refused to fulfil his promise. Panic-stricken, horrified by his perfidy, the girlish affection which she had conceived for him was destroyed, and in its place there grew an unspeakable aversion. The Italian blood in her veins asserted itself, and she fled from him, even as she had fled from her father. Eluding all pursuit she reached Vienna, where her musical powers soon enabled her to support herself. Thence she drifted from place to place, until she reached London. She had always avoided Italy, being ashamed and afraid to return to her father, foreseeing how much her flight must have imperilled her good name, and how difficult, even impossible, it would be to persuade him of her innocence of all wrong.

No longer vengeful or angry, broken in health and spirit, the father died very soon after he had rescued his child from comparative poverty, and the sordid though honest life she was leading, and, as has been said, Juliet Mayne, not yet quite twenty-one—this young, accomplished, beautiful, and unhappy scion of a noble Italian family—found herself wealthy and independent, but utterly alone in the world.

At first she had thought of returning to Italy, but eventually effecting an arrangement with an elderly English lady, an old friend of her mother's, as chaperon and companion, she retired with her to Cheltenham. Here, for a while, they lived in great retirement, but gradually Juliet

Mayne's musical abilities brought her into unavoidable notice, and by degrees into a little of the best local society. Here, by accident, she met Sir Charles Vandellan, who was visiting in the neighbourhood, and notwithstanding a certain disparity in their years, a marriage was the result, as we have seen.

This was the sum and substance of what Henry Swainson learned in the course of the long interview which followed upon his finding Lady Vandellan waiting for him in his rooms. This was the history she gave of her life, after he had shown her that if he was to help her at all in her trouble, she must have perfect confidence in him, and keep nothing back.

She began by explaining that having acknowledged her fault and her difficulty to him, she felt he was the fittest and only person she could further trust or look to for advice in an impending peril. She was in a state of the greatest possible excitement and distress, and after briefly stating that she and her husband were in town on their way to Rome sooner than they expected, and that she had come out on the pretext of seeing her milliner, said, "But in reality, Mr. Swainson, it is you I have come to see, first as a friend, secondly as a lawyer. One deceit only leads to another, you see, and Heaven only knows how many more I must resort to if I am to preserve Sir Charles's happiness. After what you discovered at Malvern, I feel that you are the only person who can help me—who can save me, perhaps, if you will, when you know the worst.

The young barrister endeavoured to reassure her, and she continued:

"Unhappily, you are not the only person who has recognised me, who has found me out rather, and he, above all, is the one most to be dreaded. Oh, I little knew the risk I ran even in our retirement; you were the first to show it me—and now, now——"

Here the poor lady broke down, and became for a time quite incoherent. At this point it was that Swainson began to put such questions as ended in his eliciting the whole truth. When at length he was in full possession of it, he said:

"Tell me candidly, Lady Vandellan, how much does Sir Charles know of your life?"

"In the main he knows everything, save of my acquaintance with Caldini—of that he never heard. Help me,

help me still to keep that from him, Mr. Swainson, for, should he ever learn it—— Ah! it does not bear thinking of, and yet this may happen at any moment, for it is Caldini who has discovered me. How, I know not, but he has. I have seen him, spoken with him, and he threatens me. He also knows that we are going to Rome on business connected with my estate, for it was upon the pretence that he came about this that he presented himself suddenly at Malvern only three days ago. Imagine my consternation, my horror, when, using the name of my agent or steward in Rome, he was shown into the library, where Sir Charles and I were sitting together. An adept always in disguises, he deceived me by his voice and manner, and I did not know him at first, but all in a moment I recognised him, and I thought I should have died with terror. I know not how I hid my feelings, but I did, and while he was pretending to talk on the business which had brought him, and with which he appeared to be conversant, he contrived to give me this letter unseen," and Lady Vandellan placed a folded paper in Swainson's hand. "You will see the threat it contains," she added, as he opened it.

"Ah, you forget," said Swainson, running his eye over it, "I am not Italian scholar enough to read it."

"Well, no matter; he simply states that unless I provide him with ample funds for the rest of his life he will disclose all to my husband."

"But," enquired Swainson, "has he any proofs of your early acquaintance?"

"Alas, yes! he has fourteen letters of mine to himself—letters that would seem to compromise me, and I have come to you to entreat, to implore you to try and get them from him—to see if you cannot make some terms with him to secure his silence. I would pay him anything in reason for the letters. Whilst he holds them I should never know a moment's peace, for I could not trust him not to use them. I should be for ever in his power."

The young barrister pondered for a while, and then said:

"As you truly say, one deceit leads to another, Lady Vandellan, and there is no help for you now but in deceit. We cannot stay to question the morality. I must get those letters for you, and we must then outface, defy, deny this fellow's statement, if he should make any. He could prove nothing without the letters!"

"No," she interrupted eagerly.

"Well, then, tell me where I may find him. If I can save you, be sure I will. I will do so for Sir Charles's sake, remember, if not for your own. His happiness depends on his ignorance, and, wrong as it may sound, I will preserve his happiness at any cost."

Lady Vandellan then gave Swainson directions where to find Caldini in London. "You must seek him at once," she said, "as he only gives me a month to make up my mind. Here are bank-notes for six or seven hundred pounds; make the best bargain you can with him. If that sum will not satisfy him, here is a blank cheque on my private account, which I have signed, and which you can fill up for any further amount that may be necessary. I must leave all to you, as I cannot see you again. I must go now. We start for Florence at six to-morrow morning, and we shall not be in Rome till the end of the month. If you succeed in getting the letters, send them to me there by some safe means, to the address you will find here with the money and cheque."

Swainson took the envelope she handed to him, and, with many assurances that she might rely on him, and amidst a torrent of gratitude from her, he eventually saw her safely into a cab in St. James's Street, as the Palace clock rang out twelve.

He was so absorbed by the strange events which this unexpected interview had revealed to him, and with the position in which it had placed him, that he did not observe the tall figure of a seedily-dressed man of foreign aspect, following close upon his heels, as he returned to his door. Just as he reached it the man came up, and thoroughly startled him by saying, in clear but broken English: "Sir, your pardon, but I can save you some trouble, if I guess right. You seek to speak with one Caldini—I am that one."

Swainson, despite his strong nerve, was for the moment unable to answer, and the man continued:

"I only guess—but yet I guess, that the lady just parted with has spoken to you of me. I do not know you—but again I guess; her business with me is left to you. Am I right? Will you deal with me?"

The barrister had recovered his composure. He eyed the fellow steadily under the gaslight from top to toe, and then said coolly: "Yes, if you can give some proof that you are he."

"Sir," was the reply, "the lady was

Lady Vandellan; once her name was Mayne; once she eloped with me; I am now poor, she is rich. I want money. I track her now wherever she goes, even to Rome to-morrow, until she pays me. If you are to pay me you can—now, and I disappear till I want more money, when I come to her again, or to you, as you please—is this proof?"

Swainson felt that it was; he saw that it was not a time to stick at trifles, and he decided how to act. "Walk in," he said, "give me ten minutes, and we will see if we can do business together."

He showed the man into his sitting-room, which was on the ground-floor, and instantly turning the key upon him, rushed out of the house and across Piccadilly to the police-station in Vine Street.

Giving his card to the inspector on duty, he explained that he might want the assistance of a constable on a delicate matter he had in hand, and begged that one might be immediately sent to take up his stand at the door of No. — in Duke Street, there to wait further orders. As an earnest of his good faith, he paid then and there the usual fee for such service, and a man was instantly told off for it. In less than ten minutes Swainson had unlocked the door of his room, and was again face to face with his strange visitor. The man rose as he said:

"You have taken great precaution, sir, but why should I run away? it is not for me to run."

"Never mind that," said the barrister; "now to business. Sit down; you guess rightly in supposing that I know the state of affairs between you and Lady Vandellan, so we will not beat about the bush. You have letters of hers—fourteen in number. Name your price for them."

The man involuntarily grasped at the outside of his breast-pocket, and Swainson knew that he had the letters with him there.

"I do not sell those," he said a little nervously, for he was evidently not prepared for the rapid way in which the barrister had come to the point.

"Then, in that case, do you know," went on the latter firmly, "what I am going to do?"

"Oh, you can do nothing that I care for."

"You are mistaken; if you are not reasonable, and refuse to sell the letters—you shall have a good price for them—I shall give you into custody for being in

possession of property that does not belong to you. I have a policeman outside there, ready to take you. Look, you may see him standing against the area railings now," and he drew back the curtain of the window. Caldini glanced through the opening, and saw the constable, but he shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Oh, it is nonsense that; the letters are my property, I can prove they are addressed to me."

"Very likely," said Swainson; "that does not matter for my purpose. You refuse to sell the letters; I call in the policeman and give you into custody; you are taken to the station and searched. The letters are found on you. I claim them on behalf of the lady who wrote them. It will take you some time to prove your identity before a magistrate, and that they are really yours. In the meanwhile, I get possession of them and destroy them. You may, if you carry matters to extremity, charge me with false imprisonment and all the rest of it, but it will be difficult and cost money, and take a long time. Perhaps you punish me in the end; I take my punishment. Perhaps that may be a satisfaction to you, but, meanwhile, the letters no longer exist; you have no proofs that Lady Vandellan ever saw you in her life, and if you attempt to annoy her, the law will protect her. Now," went on Swainson slowly, "Signor Caldini, do you realise that picture sufficiently to contrast it with another which I will paint for you? I say to you, name your price for the letters; you hand them to me; and you go away from this house a rich man. You have no wish to harm a woman you once were fond of; you only want money. I offer it to you. Now, how much?"

The foreigner had keenly followed all that had been uttered, and appeared to be revolving it in his mind. Presently he said:

"Ah, but this is nonsense. Your law will not allow that you yourself take the things from my pocket—your police take them, perhaps, but they are returned to me."

"Yes," said Swainson, "but not before I have examined them to see if they are what I shall state them to be, and when I once have them in my hands I pop them in a moment into the fire, and then, where are you? I shall be punished, perhaps, but the lady will be safe, and that is all I care for! Do you see?"

Signor Caldini showed signs that he did

see, for after a little more consideration he went on:

"Well, give me five hundred pounds in good money down at this moment, and you shall have the letters."

"Let me see them," said Swainson.

"Ah no!" responded the other, "not till I see the money. You may destroy them even here, as you threaten."

"No, you could prevent that; you are stronger than I am; the fire is out, too," said Swainson, pointing to the grate; "the gas-light above there is out of my reach. See, now, I will place the money on this side of the table by you, you shall count it. Then you shall put the letters on my side of the table—mind! all, every one! Come now, be wise!"

And he began counting the notes as he took them from the packet Lady Vandellan had recently given him, and laid them one by one within reach of his visitor.

The sight of the ready money was too much for the Italian. He made a feeble show of hesitation, but presently drew from his breast-pocket a packet of letters, time-worn and dirty for the most part, and held together by an old elastic band.

"That is all, on my faith, all fourteen," he added, putting them on the table by Swainson's side, and he turned his pocket inside out.

Swainson, having counted and examined the letters sufficiently to convince himself that they were what he wanted, at length said:

"Right!"

Then he took a large blue envelope from the writing-case on the table, put them in it, fastened it down, and dipping a pen in some ink, hastened to direct it.

Whilst Caldini was gathering up the notes and putting them in his pocket, he eyed the bulky blue envelope longingly, as if regretting now having parted with its contents. For a moment he seemed inclined to seize it; his brow darkened ominously, and he made a movement with his hand towards the packet.

"Ah! ah!" cried Swainson, suddenly observing the action and rising quickly, "you forget the policeman outside, do you? Shall I call him in to see you safely off the premises?"

"Oh, you mistake me," said the Italian with a sardonic smile and bow. "I wish you good-night."

"It is the best thing you can do," said Swainson, opening the door, and the next instant the man was in the street. As the

barrister let him out, and watched him disappear into the darkness, he beckoned to the constable, and after dismissing him, closed the door and returned to his room. For a while he stood irresolute; presently he looked at his watch, put on his hat, and going forth into the night, bent his steps to the Wits' Club.

"Ah, Smith!" he exclaimed to a gentleman at that moment just emerging into the well-lighted portico, "you are the very man I wanted to see—I am so glad I have caught you again. I think there is a little commission you can execute in Rome for me after all; see," and then he took the blue envelope from his pocket, and after standing in earnest conversation with him for several minutes, he handed him the packet, which the other put in his pocket, and with a few more words the two shook hands and parted at the street corner.

CHAPTER IV.

It was about eight days after the events just recorded that Swainson received the letter from Rome, dated the 11th of April, with which this chronicle opens. It confirmed, as we have seen, only too surely his suspicions concerning Caldini's intention if possible to regain possession of the letters at all costs.

Answering it by return of post, he awaited with the keenest anxiety the next communication from his friend.

This arrived towards the end of the month, and on the eve of Swainson's departure for India. Thus it ran:

"I am not surprised to find that my suspicions were correct. Any doubt that might have lingered would have been cleared up by subsequent events here, even without your letter of confirmation, and I should have written anyway to-day to tell you of the tremendous affair which happened only last evening—the tragic sequel to my adventure in the railway-carriage.

"The window of my room, which is high up, looks into one of those Roman courtyards which, as I dare say you know, generally present an amusing scene, with their ledges and roofs occupied by all sorts of live-stock: cats, dogs, monkeys, parrots, flowers and greenery, and the various evidences of the crowded life gathered together on the different floors. I was sitting last night without my coat, just before dusk, watching the antics of two monkeys in a neighbouring balcony, and it occurred to me that if one of them should get loose from his chain what a game he

might have, and how very easily he might enter any of the rooms. Indeed, I thought that an agile man might do the same by clambering up or dropping from level to level, by aid of the pipes and irregular projections and the network of wires by which the water is brought up from the wells in sliding copper bowls. Perhaps my mind had been running on thieves—anyhow, I was struck for the first time with the insecurity of one's belongings, and having received your letter but a few hours before, I walked to my trunk in the corner, unlocked it, and looked at your fatal blue envelope just to reassure myself that it was safe. Then I began rummaging among shirts and collars for something I remembered I wanted, could not find it, and finally, tired of stooping over the trunk, gave up the search, lighted a pipe, and flung myself on my bed.

"The evening was very warm; everybody's windows were wide open. I had had a hard day's work, and I suppose I began to doze. Suddenly I was aroused by a slight sound. There was only just enough light left in the sky to show me where the window was, but, what was more important, there was quite enough to show me that there was a man apparently getting into my room by the open casement from the narrow balcony. For a moment I thought I was dreaming, for his figure, telling dark against the sky, looked like that of the spurious contadino, otherwise your friend Caldini. I sprang up, and he, having calculated, no doubt, from the quiet and darkness that the room was empty, was so startled that I saw him step back, clutch at something, slip, stagger, topple over, and suddenly disappear. There was a wild cry of despair, followed by a heavy thud and a shriek. It was all so momentary and horrifying that I don't pretend to describe accurately any succeeding details. The main fact with which you are concerned is that the poor wretch was picked up in the court below quite dead and sadly mutilated, and that he has been recognised as one Giovanni Caldini, an erewhile singer and actor, who, having lost his voice, has lately been employed in the service of the Papal Secret Police. This latter circumstance may account for his having got clear of the difficulty I put him in at Chiusi. I can't say, and I have had no time yet to make enquiries as to how he could have tracked me or have known I still hold possession of the letters, or how he actually reached my balcony. The

supposition is that he must have gained admission to an adjoining room, and then have crept catlike to my balcony.

"This, however, is of little importance to you or me now—you will be content to know that the letters are beyond his reach, though it seems a horrible way to have secured their safety. Still he paid the cost himself, and through no one's fault but his own. I have just found out that Lady V. has arrived in Rome; directly I have executed your commission you shall hear again."

A few days later Swainson received a grateful letter from the lady herself, acknowledging the receipt of the compromising packet.

He sailed for India within forty-eight hours, calming his conscience for the share he had had in this his strangest experience, professional and otherwise, of men and manners, by the recollection that it had preserved his old friend's domestic happiness. The assurances that this remains intact which he receives from Malvern from time to time, are quite sufficient, he considers, to justify his having helped Lady Vandellan to keep her dangerous secret.

JACK'S SWEETHEART.

By MRS. LEITH ADAMS.

DOLLY, the shipwright's only child, had been the pet and pride of Sandybeach village ever since she could run alone. Perhaps the death of her young mother when Dolly was born, surrounded the little one from the first with a halo of sympathy. Every one was so sorry for honest David Deacon, left with the care of a motherless babe! Some of the women (maids or widows these) felt so keenly for his situation that they would gladly have undertaken the post of stepmother to the big-eyed solemn-looking child who seemed such an unsuitable responsibility for a lone man. All the place respected David Deacon, but his fingers were as rough as nutmeg-graters with hard work in the ship-yard, and his ways and manners were hearty enough to his mates, but too loud and outspoken to render him a suitable companion for an infant.

However, as time passed on, the attentions of these well-meaning females slackened—that is, towards the shipwright, not towards Baby Dolly. For David managed

to get along "somehow," and if he would not see that he might get on better, what could any one do with a man obstinately blind? Yet the disappointed aspiring ones continued to adore Dolly.

Imagine her—with the sweetest wee face ever seen clipt close round by a little scarlet hood, that again surmounting a scarlet cloak, a purple skirt, and two bits of boots; imagine her—sitting on her father's doorstep, laughing at the marigolds that stood all a-row in the sunshine, and nursing a kitten white as milk in her plump little arms: then say if it was to be wondered at that every man and woman in Sandybeach was proud of Dolly?

Jack Holdfast, David Deacon's apprentice, and likely enough some day to be his partner, was a tall, blue-eyed, curly-headed chap, broad-shouldered and sturdy, when Dolly was a wee lisping lass of three summers; and the child took possession of him, and tyrannised over him as only a child can, ruling him with the dainty dual-sceptre of her brightness and her sweetness as with a rod of iron.

At Sandybeach the shore was low and the tide ran out far. What fun to be carried (in Jack's arms) across the dark stretches of slippery seaweed down to the silvery line of ripples that came creeping slowly yet surely over the golden sand, and there watch the little crabs, left by the last tide, scurrying to reach the water that meant new life, and hope, and freedom! How delicious to be carried (always in Jack's arms) up the crazy zigzag stairway in the ship-yard that led up the scaffolding, gathered like a network around some ship about to be launched on the shining waters, and from the giddy elevation peep down at father, looking ever so small below!

But all these things happened a long while ago now, for Dolly, the shipwright's daughter, is now a blooming maiden of "sweet seventeen," the pride and the beauty of Sandybeach.

Dolly has the softest, most bewitching eyes in the world—deep-grey, with curling black lashes. Her mouth is a rosebud; her locks ripple, and each ripple is touched with sunlight; and her form is lithe and slender, yet full of health and activity, for Dolly is no laggard, and her pretty sun-browned hands are seldom idle.

David used to say his lass was "brisk as a bee," and watch her through the mist that rose from the bowl of his churchwarden, with no little pride in his handsome eyes. Though Dolly was said

to "favour" her mother, she got those clear grey eyes of hers from the shipwright; nor did a certain half-saucy, half-tender coquetry that lurked in their clear depths take from their power of charming. Quite the reverse, indeed, as honest Jack Holdfast had found to his cost already!

The shipwright's long sloping garden, which ran down to the shore and was so mixed up with it at the lower end that marigolds and heartsease sometimes lifted their heads from the sand, while shells and long dark trails of algæ were not unknown among the bushes of currant and lavender, was holy ground to Jack.

Its straggling wall was in places topped with gilly-flowers, that swayed in the wind and grew bravely in a scanty soil; and Jack dearly loved the luscious scent of their red-brown blossoms; for—standing near them (so near that Dolly had plucked a spray and set it in her breast)—an old, old story had been told "in the gloaming," and Jack's lips had tasted a kiss from his sweetheart's rosy mouth.

There was a ring of tenderness and truth in Jack's character that raised him above his fellows, and made him—to all intents and purposes—in spite of his toil-hardened hands and homely garb—the truest of true gentlemen. "God bless thee, lass, and make me worthy of thee!" he said to Dolly as he left her that night; while the girl was ready to wish her lover were less solemn in look and speech, since it made the tears rise, and her heart swell to a sigh.

Dolly had been reading a charming story-book in which the lover called his mistress first a "queen" and then an "angel." There was no chance worth mentioning of Jack calling her a "queen;" and there was some reason to suppose he would hardly have thought it right to call her an "angel."

It will therefore be seen that Dolly's rose-leaf was not without a crumple; and that though a sweet, all womanly joy in her betrothal nestled deep down in her heart, a little sense of disappointment on certain points—a lack of sentiment and romance in the whole affair—made itself felt.

Even the shipwright himself assisted to develope this dissatisfied feeling on Dolly's part, for what did he say by way of comment on the state of affairs between her and Jack? Did he say that Jack had won a "pearl" or a "rosebud"? Did he speak as if Dolly had conferred a priceless

gift upon her young knight, by plighting her troth to him, all among the gilly-flowers? Not he!

He just patted her on the back, touched her curly locks with his kind rough hand, and said: "You're a lucky lass, Dolly, and it 'ull be your own fault if you're not a happy one."

Dearly as she loved him, Dolly was just a bit afraid of her father, so she said nothing at the time; but, once in her own room, she pouted and flouted, and tossed her pretty head, and felt altogether a good deal ill-used; though under all, the happiness was singing in her heart like a lark at sunrise.

Sandybeach did not excite itself particularly over the betrothal of Jack Holdfast and the shipwright's daughter, because it was just what everyone had been expecting. The women smiled to each other, and said, "What a bonnie bride the child would make!" and the men rallied Jack, and told him he was "in luck's way," an assertion he never contradicted, since he believed himself to be the very luckiest man that ever stood in shoe-leather.

True, he and Dolly must wait a while; for she was "but a lassie yet;" and he wasn't out of his apprenticeship. But time would soon slip by, bringing with it the desired haven of a little home all his own, a cage wherein to put his pretty bright-eyed bird.

Jack sang over his work, and whistled over his work, and was just the jolliest-hearted fellow in Sandybeach or out of it; and "walked out" of an evening with Dolly by his side, Dolly very happy, and just a little shamefaced when she met a neighbour, and sometimes thinking thoughts that would have sorely puzzled Jack had he known them.

It was very nice, of course, to be walking along with her stalwart lover by her side—but it must be nicer still to wear a long trailing gown and hear it rustle on the crisp green grass.

It was delightful to meet Jack's loving smile, and happy nod of greeting, as he came up the garden from the ship-yard, but—oh, how infinitely more delightful would it have been to be a lady, and see your lover greet you with doffed hat and head bared in your honour!

Fortunately, Sandybeach knew nothing of these petty troubles that marred Dolly's full content; while as to David Deacon, he would most probably have been ready to

box Dolly's pretty little ears if he had got an inkling of them! But, indeed, the shipwright had enough to do just now with his own affairs, and was himself the theme and centre of interest and gossip throughout the village.

For was it not said that he had taken to "walking out" with Jael Dunce?

Jael Dunce! Such a name for a woman to be burdened with through life! The wife of Heber the Kenite is not such an endearing character that parents need go calling their children after her. But old Farmer Dunce was always known to have a craze for Scripture names.

Jael was a straight-up-and-down kind of woman, with hard, yet not uncomely features, and grey-lined hair twisted into a small unyielding knob at the back of her head and transfixed by a monster hairpin.

Jael had devoted a long life to her cross-grained old father, nursing him through a trying illness which had lasted for several years; and, now that he was laid to rest in the churchyard on the hill, maybe David Deacon appeared to her as a sort of sun, ordained to shine upon her life in its eventide. At all events, she walked beside him of a Sunday afternoon before all beholders, with a certain defiant pride; stuck a new puce bow a-top of her bonnet, and new puce strings to tie in a neat twist beneath her chin—all little facts that had a certain pathos of their own, had there been anyone in Sandybeach to look upon them in that light.

It may be said at once that David displayed sound judgment in taking to himself Jael Dunce, and converting her into Jael Deacon; which he did with the promptness and energy that characterised most of his actions in life. Also, that Sandybeach generally was disappointed in its prognostications as to Dolly and her stepmother "getting on badly."

Not a matron in the village but was prepared to make a victim of pretty Dolly, and pet and console the little beauty under the trying circumstances in which she found herself placed.

But Dolly only laughed at all their hints and innuendoes; and said that Jael was a "dear old thing," who made such cakes and puddings as were past all belief.

Jack was one great radiant smile at the wedding, which he looked upon as a prelude to his own, and the shipwright looked as if he didn't care a straw what anybody said so long as he was sure of pleasing himself—that being his state of mind to a turn.

As to Jael—for years her old father had done nothing but find fault with her, and when she found her husband and Dolly so pleased with everything she did, tears of happiness would rise to her eyes, and she had to knit ever so many stitches by guess-work (all awry too) before she could blink them away.

There are people in the world who have the hardest shells and the softest kernels conceivable; who look as if they were carved in wood, and yet whose hearts are as soft as butter. Of these Jael was one.

A great love sprang up between the two women, and it was touching to see the interest Jael took in Jack and Jack's sweetheart. The romance of it all was something her own young days had never known; nevertheless, it was beautiful exceedingly in her eyes.

Dolly said that it was ever so much happier at home "now father had got married." Jael's brothers, Aminadab and Zerubbabel, said "Sister was old enough surely to know her own mind" (of which there could be no doubt). Altogether, it may be fairly said that David Deacon's choice was at last justified in the eyes of all men, and all women too—a far more difficult matter.

"I sha'n't feel as father will be lonesome now, when I'm gone," said Dolly to Jack.

"That's true," replied her lover; "and, Dolly—things bein' so blessed and comfortable, don't you think you could come to me a bit sooner—eh, lass?"

They were sitting beside each other on the beach under the shadow of a boat that lay high and dry.

Jack's arm had stolen round the girl's slim waist, and she felt his breath warm against her cheek. She loved him dearly—dearly! It made her happy to feel him so near, and know he was all her own, and yet—

The spirit of coquetry was in Dolly's nature. She was living a dual life. In one she was Jack's dear little sweetheart, loving and loved, looking forward to the day when they two should have a dear little home, a home from whose cosy, curtained window she should peep out slyly, as evening came and the day's work was done, to see if her "lad" was coming; meet him at the door with a kiss on her lips; and be sure that the kettle was well on the boil, so that the tea might be made as good tea should.

This was one life, happy, healthy, simple, true.

The other was quite a different affair. In that Dolly was the heroine of one of those romantic stories she loved; she had a lover at her feet, who sighed perpetually and called her the most delightful names, thinking himself in Paradise if she gave him her finger-tips to kiss.

Hence it came about that Dolly gave herself airs that evening under the shadow of the boat; turned away her head, and said she "wasn't sure" and she "didn't care," and told several other untruths. Finally, she sent Jack home with a downcast look upon his honest face, and a sad look in his bonnie blue eyes, the thought of which, afterwards, almost made her cry.

It was only a lovers' quarrel, and they made it up shortly. Indeed, there was not much choice in the matter, for coquetry and affectation are very apt to die at the prospect of a parting (when there is any real love to go upon); and it came about that Jack Holdfast had to go to Ostend upon important business for the shipwright. A journey to Ostend appeared to be a serious matter in the eyes of Sandybeach. It was a vast undertaking—going to a foreign country to learn new tricks in an old trade—but it was an honourable thing, and no doubt would "advantage" the lad in the end. So—a sort of accredited agent for the firm in which he was one day to be enrolled partner—Jack went.

The most comforting remembrance he carried away with him was the thought of the tears in Dolly's bright eyes as she bade him farewell, and the glowing thought that David Deacon had said the wedding should be hastened if the mission was well carried out. The last glimpse Jack got of Sandybeach was the old square tower of the church on the hill, and he thought to himself how gay its bells would sound ringing out over the sea the day that he married his bonnie love.

Dolly cried herself to sleep the night Jack went away. In the morning the tip of her little nose was pink, and her eyes showed each a rim to match; but she had plenty to do by-and-by, for Jael managed to get a nasty fall, and sprained her ankle so that the doctor said it was "worse than a clean fracture to deal with." Jael lay very still in grievous pain, patient beyond what any other woman would have been, because her past life had been one long lesson of patience; and touched into the tenderest gratitude by David's anxiety about her, and Dolly's gentle tendance of her.

Jael would draw Dolly's bonnie face to hers of an evening and kiss it, with a strange, almost shamefaced tenderness, and then bid the girl go and get a breath of fresh air. For the evenings were long and light now, and the summer sea came creeping up the sands, glistening with the reflected radiance of the bright canopy overhead.

Then a strange and wonderful thing happened to Dolly.

About a mile from the village was an ancient and deserted manor-house, crumbling to decay. Some blight was over it, people said—a Chancery suit or some such mildew. But no blight was on its lovely old garden, where summer's hand had made all things fair, and the unchecked luxuriance of the trees and flowers had made, in many successive years, a sort of natural tangled wilderness. Here, too, was a strange deep pond, like a large well that had overflowed its bed, in which was a spring of water, ever bubbling up, and gently swaying the white lilies and their broad, green, boat-like leaves that floated on its breast, as though some water-nymph's hand stirred them from beneath.

Dolly loved this wild, deserted garden, and, one golden evening, when the lilies in the pond seemed golden flowers upon a golden sea, having wandered there, saw fit to covet one of the great closed buds, that floated just beyond her reach.

She managed to catch a leaf that lay near it, and thought to sway the two together; but the round slimy stem came out of its bed, while the obstinate bud never moved.

"Let me get it for you!" said a voice behind her; and Dolly, wonderfully sweet and pretty in the mellow fading light, started, and turned—to see one of the heroes out of her story-books.

There could be no doubt about it, for he possessed every qualification most characteristic of those mirrors of chivalry. He was tall and slim, and beautifully attired in evening dress, with a light overcoat flung over his black attire, and a flower—such a flower!—in his button-hole. He had a weak, but attractive face, rather curly fair hair, and the most angelic smile—so Dolly thought—that she had ever seen.

Besides, he took his hat off as she turned; he stood bareheaded before her, as he asked her permission to capture the wilful lily-bud.

"This is the sort of man, then," thought Dolly, watching him wide-eyed, "who would

call one a queen, and an angel." She had seen specimens of the genus in the squire's pew, and in the vicar's pew at church; at the cattle-show, and riding by with the Ladies Bellraven from the Hall. But she had never seen one so near as this, and, assuredly, none had ever given her such courtly greeting.

The lily bud was plucked, and Dolly carried it in her hand, feeling not unlike a queen bearing a sceptre.

"Do you often walk in this quaint old garden?" said the stranger presently.

"Yes," said Dolly. Then she grew rosy red as she added, "I am Dolly Deacon, the shipwright's daughter."

"And I am Arthur Cunningham, at your service," replied the knight of the lily. "I am staying at Ferndale."

"With Mrs. Nesbit?" said Dolly impulsively. "Is she——?" Then she stopped short, twirling the poor lily on its stem.

"Is she a nice person to stay with?" said Arthur Cunningham, completing the sentence for her and stroking his long fair moustache to hide a lurking smile at Dolly's unconventional simplicity. "No, not at all; quite the reverse."

"What do you stop there for, then?" asked Dolly, wondering.

"Well, you see—she is my aunt!"

Could anything be prettier, thought Mr. Cunningham, than the fair picture of confusion this rustic beauty made at this confession?

The truth was, Mrs. Nesbit did not bear a pleasant reputation in Sandybeach. She was a woman who considered herself ill-used by fate, and wished to take it out of everybody in consequence. Her husband had been a drunkard. He had wasted as much of her substance as he could, and only left the residue untouched because he had died before he could make away with it. Her only son had so conducted himself that she was constrained to feel no sorrow when he too died. Why then should she help to make the world pleasant to other people? She didn't make it pleasant. She made it as unpleasant as she could. She could not be a very agreeable person to stay with.

"Being my aunt—my mother's own sister," said Arthur Cunningham, "I am obliged to come and stay with her sometimes."

He coloured slightly as he spoke, for he was conscious of deeper and more selfish reasons for paying a certain amount of attention to "Aunt Nesbit."

He was her heir, and had "expectations." His sisters often said to him (he had been somewhat idle, and had hung fire in the battle of life): "Arthur, it is your solemn duty to keep in with Aunt Nesbit—it is your duty to us."

"It is very dull and stupid up there, as you may suppose," continued the knight of the lily, looking admiringly into Dolly's eyes; "but I sha'n't mind it—now."

"Now!" That meant since he had met her, thought Dolly.

As she walked pensively home, she felt a good deal taller than she had ever done in her life. As she went up the steep matter-of-fact stairs at home, she almost heard the frou-frou of a trailing silken robe behind her. Neither did she fail to call to mind that Mr. Cunningham had asked her if she "often" walked in the deserted garden of an evening.

Next time Jael begged her to go for a "bit of an outing" Dolly felt herself blush so hotly that she was glad to stand by the window and make believe to be watching a little fishing-smack come in, with red sails set and white prow lazily cutting the water. She was glad to turn away from the sight of that pale, patient face lying back in uncomplaining pain upon the pillow, the grey hair falling back from the square features, the thin lips set in a line of resolute endurance.

But for all this secret compunction, Dolly met Mr. Cunningham again and yet again. She had often read a romance; now she was living one. Not in the truest sense, though. Not a throb of tenderness ever stirred her heart for the knight of the lily; only her vanity was gratified. She told Arthur Cunningham many things. All about the books she read, and the thoughts she thought, and he drew her out and led her on, and was mightily amused, finding the wearisome monotony of "staying with Aunt Nesbit" charmingly diversified.

"I have quite taken to rusticity," he wrote to his eldest sister Julia.

"I only hope it isn't rusticity in a petticoat," remarked that sapient young person, knowing her brother's flirting capabilities.

The young man repeatedly said to himself that he "meant the girl no harm," in which he certainly spoke the truth. But unconsciously he was doing poor Dolly most cruel wrong. Sandybeach had been proud of Dolly; but now nasty whispers here and there, like little serpents, began to raise their heads and hiss, and one of

the workmen in the yard was heard to say it "was time Jack wur whoam."

At last, one summer night, Arthur Cunningham, moved thereto by the hush of the flower-scented gloaming, by the exceeding fairness of poor Dolly in the pallid amber light, by the nearness of a pretty woman who seemed ready enough to be worshipped, suddenly put his arm round the village beauty, drew her to his side, and kissed her dainty cheek. An instant more, and he was conscious of the extreme folly of which he had been guilty.

"Oh, Mr. Cunningham!" cried Dolly, who had paled, not flushed beneath that sudden caress; "why did you do that? I never, never thought you would do such a thing!"

Arthur Cunningham wore an eye-glass hanging to the slenderest of chains. He took it up, screwed it into his eye, and then—from the critical wonder of that look Dolly fled.

Her airy castle had tumbled about her ears; the pretty bubble which had shone with such fair prismatic hues in the sunshine of her fancy, had burst.

Hotly glowed the cheek that Arthur Cunningham's lips had touched. Once safe in her own little chamber, she washed her face and scrubbed it, as though she thought to wipe the stain of that kiss away. How dare he kiss "Jack's Sweetheart!" Above all, how dare he do so without "with your leave" or "if you please;" and just as if he had a right to do it!

To have been wooed (in vain) in that sweet old garden; perhaps to have seen Mr. Cunningham on his knees on the moss-grown pathway; maybe to have let him kiss her hand in a fond farewell salute; all this would have been delicious—but for things to end like this!

Every woman, when things go wrong with her, longs to go to another woman for comfort.

So Dolly stole into Jael's room, knelt down by the bed, and just burst out crying.

"Dear child, tell me what's ado?" said Jael, gently touching the bowed head with her hard hand, and letting it rest there. "Never mind though, perhaps you'd as lief not tell an old woman like me; but I know, lass, it's wearyin' you are for Jack; the time seems long—longer than you thought it would. Patience, child, patience——" But Dolly, trembling in every limb, rose to her feet,

kissed Jael in a hurried, flustered kind of way, and was gone like a shadow.

Half an hour later, when she went creeping downstairs to see if the girl was duly setting forth David Deacon's supper, she became conscious of a stir in the cosy parlour.

A neighbour was there, smoking the pipe of peace; and the shipwright, his jolly face one broad smile of content, told his lass he had a bit of news for her.

Jack had come home.

"Thee'st ta'en away her breath, shipwright," said the visitor, chuckling; for Dolly was panting like a hunted hare.

"I'll go and meet him at the bottom of the garden," said the girl, paling more and more.

"Sweethearts like to have their meetin's and their partin's to themselves," said the neighbour, who was a bit of an oracle in the way of truisms.

So Dolly went.

How warm was the summer's night—how still! It seemed to be listening to the soft lap-lap of the incoming tide. Dolly took her stand under a mighty thorn-bush that was blown all one way by the buffetings of the sea wind. Great heavy night-moths came blundering along, booming and buzzing as they flew. From far away over the wide spreading sand-banks came the plaintive cry of the curlew, and the "weep-weep-weep," of the sandpiper.

Dolly's heart beat heavily within her breast; her breath came quick and fast. Was not that the crush of a firm tread on the shingle? Jack's sweetheart knew that her lover was near; and yet she was not glad! "Perfect love casteth out fear," but Dolly's love, real and true as it was, had not been perfect; it had been full of flaws; and now fear overshadowed Love, until the little god was well-nigh smothered.

"Jack, is it you, dear?" said a small trembling voice; and a small trembling figure stepped out of the shadow of the thorn-bush to stand right in Jack's pathway. Another moment and the girl would have nestled in her lover's arms, laid her soft cheek to his, and told him all the story, keeping nothing back, not even the kiss that she had tried to wash off.

But no loving arms were held out to Dolly; no lips sought hers in the long sweet kiss of happy meeting after weary days of absence. Jack gripped her firmly by her two slender wrists, and drew her

on to where the shimmer of the star-shine, and the gleam of a crescent moon that hung like a silver bow above the old church-tower, fell full upon her lovely quivering face.

"Let me look at thee!" he said, hissing the words fiercely between his teeth; "let me be sure as it's thee and none other—Jack's sweetheart—her as has broke his heart and marred his life!"

"Jack—Jack," moaned Dolly, "let me go, you hurt me!"

"Let thee go?" he answered in a passion of scorn; "no, I wunnot let thee go! Hurt thee? what is thy hurt to mine? Mine's in the heart, lass—in the heart!" But he loosed his hold upon her even as he spoke, falling back into the shadow of the old thorn-tree and leaning against its gnarled and twisted stem.

"I come whoam," he said, folding his arms, and drawing his breath deeply in between each sentence, "full o' loving thoughts of thee. Thy pretty face has been before me night and day while I've been away, and if I've done well, I've been glad for thy sake, thinking the master would give thee to me a bit sooner, and let the bells ring for me and for thee before the summer should be past. Ay, ay, it's well for thee to hang thy pretty head i' shame before me, through it nigh breaks my heart to see thee so. I'd rather," continued Jack, clenching his strong brown hand, and pushing back the cap from his damp brow as if its weight oppressed him, "I'd rather have seen thee dead, with thy white face floatin' among the lilies on the pool i' the old garden, than be told of thy meetin's there wi' one as can bring thee no good, and means thee no good. I'd rather someone had met me and tould me as God had taken my little sweetheart from me, and shown me her grave up there on the hill, than heard her called a light-o'-love, and one as isn't fit to sit by honest Jael's hearthstone, or call an honest man husband——"

Dolly was shaking from head to foot, cowering away as though Jack's words were blows and hurt her sorely; but at last their bitterness stung her into a sort of feverish strength and courage.

She went up to his side; she peered into his face in the dim uncertain light. For a while she was silent.

From the distant sandbanks came the cry of the curlew like the cry of a broken heart. Up from the beach came the low measured moan of the sea, rising and falling in tiny wavelets against the shingle.

And these two—Jack and his sweetheart—looked into each other's faces with haggard eyes, heart-brokenly.

At length Dolly found her voice—or perhaps someone else's, for it didn't sound like hers.

"Whoever told you these things, Jack," she said, "they are lies—lies—lies! I have been foolish, very, very foolish, but, oh, my dear—my heart has never wandered from your keeping! I came down here to meet you—I came to tell you all about it. I grew strong to tell you—keeping nothing back—as I knelt by Jael's side and kissed her patient face. She is so true herself, that to be near her makes one feel it easy to be true oneself, no matter what the truth may cost. I will go back to her; she will not be hard upon me; she will pity me, though I have been so wrong and foolish; and, Jack——"

Here Dolly stopped a moment, and a sob cut her words in twain.

She could not see her lover's face, for it was bowed upon his hands; but she could hear the sighs that rent his breast. She fancied, too, that she could hear the throbbing of his heart; but that might have been the heavy beating of her own.

"Good-bye, Jack; I cannot be your sweetheart any more. Since such evil things are said of me—since men have called me a 'light-o'-love'—I am not fit to be that. But say one kind word to me before I go back to Jael, who will not thrust me from her, no matter what the people say. Do not let me have to remember that your last word was one of anger."

Having thus spoken, Dolly waited.

For what?

In truth she scarce knew.

Up at the end of the long garden she could see the lights of home; she could even hear the sounds of voices—those of her father, and the neighbour who was taking his leave for the night.

How little the shipwright thought, as he made sly jokes anent lovers' lingering ways, that there, under the shadow of the thorn-tree, Dolly's heart was breaking amid the sweet and tender sounds of a midsummer night by the sea!

How long did Dolly wait, wondering if Jack would look up—wondering if Jack would speak?

She could not tell. Time does not count by moments in such an hour as that, but by feelings.

But the dear true eyes—the bonnie blue eyes that many a maid in the village

would have been glad to see herself shining in—met Dolly's at last.

And they were drowned in tears. No woman's could be wetter than were those of stalwart Jack Holdfast as he looked at his troubled sweetheart.

The sight of her lover's tears is Dolly's undoing.

Like one who, playing with a sharp weapon, wounds a friend cruelly, the girl gives one amazed, incredulous look at the ruin she has wrought, utters a little strangled cry that has as much heartbreak in it as the far-off plaint of the curlew, and hastens towards the ruddy light of home, that seems to her in that moment as a beacon to a sailor tossing amid the billows of some strange and boisterous sea.

But as she reaches the door Dolly halts a moment, one little foot poised on the white stone step.

Every breath she draws is a sob. Every heart-beat like the dull thud of a hammer.

Is Jack coming to denounce his false and foolish sweetheart to the honest shipwright who calls her daughter? Must David Deacon, that straight-living man, whose way through life has known no devious twisting, no shady corners, be told that Dolly—his little Dolly—is spoken of as a "light-o'-love?"

No; what Jack had to say has been said to Dolly, and to no other. His heart, broken as it is, is loyal to the girl whose lips have touched his, whose hand has nestled in his own. He feels as if his tongue would blister in the utterance of a hard word to man or woman, of her whom he has looked upon as his wife to be. He has listened in dumb but cruel pain to the story of those meetings with Arthur Cunningham in the deserted garden. He has known the thrill of hatred and bitter anger that turns even a good man into a murderer at heart. He has felt the passion of sorrow which the loss of the "one ewe lamb" must ever call into being; and, although Dolly can never be his wife, Jack is beating his brains hard to shield her from the consequences of her own folly, to save her from the deeper snares still that the would-be seducer may wind about her unwary feet.

It will be seen that Jack has judged Arthur Cunningham unfairly; but then hot anger is seldom just.

Dolly heard the firm manly step crushing the shingle: heard its echo die away along the shore. Jack was gone: and oh, how still and empty the night seemed to grow

as the sound of his footfall died out of it!

"Heyday!" said the shipwright, almost tumbling against Dolly as he came out, intending to have a word with Jack; "whatever's come of thy lad? Hast thee been fallin' out wi' him, Dolly?"

This last suggestion was all the harder to bear because it took the form of a jest—jocular from the extremeness of its improbability. David Deacon tipped his little wench under the chin as he made it; and how welcome was the grey-blue veil of the dusk to that scared white face, in whose every line was written the story of a bitter grief!

"Jack has gone—home," said Dolly, almost choking over the last word.

For one instant a look of shrewd suspicion crossed David Deacon's face. Then was it chased away by a broad and beaming smile.

Old fool that he was—how was it likely the likes of him should understand the tricks, and ways, and fancies of young lovers? The old forget the whims of youth. His and Jael's had been a common-sense, matter-of-fact courtship, as became their years; happy in its elements of mutual respect and kindness, but lacking in "whimsies," little "tiffs," and sweet reconciliations of claspings and kissings.

Meanwhile, all Dolly's heart was filled with a desperate longing—only to get to Jael, only to feel the loving touch of the hard hand upon her head once more, only to pour the bitter tale of her sorrows into the ear which she knew would never turn away from her.

She watched her father eagerly. Was he going upstairs at once, or would a pinch more tobacco be squeezed into that long churchwarden of his, and sundry grave reflections upon the probable business result of Jack's visit to the Ostend "yard" be indulged in?

Yes, it was all right; David Deacon had taken a seat in his favourite hickory-wood chair by the open window, and the pipe was duly replenished.

Did ever maiden's feet flit so swiftly and so noiselessly up a high and narrow stairway as our Dolly's? Was ever maiden's face whiter or sadder; were ever maiden's eyes more full of fear and pain than hers, as she stole into Jael's room, and flung herself sobbing beside the sick woman's bed?

There let us leave her a while. Sympathy is as the very balm of Gilead to a

wounded heart; and Dolly has found that blessed fount of healing.

The next day was an important one in Jack Holdfast's life. He was the hero of the ship-yard. His manifold adventures in "foreign parts;" his dealings with men who spoke "foreign gibberish," and needed to have "plain, honest English" interpreted for them before they could understand it; his final triumph in the matter respecting which he had gone abroad, and the consequent extension of Deacon and Co.'s trade connection, were subjects of which none could weary. That the magic word "Co." might now be looked upon to represent none other than Jack himself, only added zest to all the rest. A spice of keen, though unhallowed curiosity, also flavoured the whole; for more than one wondered how things stood betwixt the prospective Co. and his master's daughter; and, since Sandybeach had been proud of Dolly, and vowed Dolly was "fit to be a lady," and faces had brightened as she passed, meeting her bonnie smile, this curiosity was dashed with regret.

Even the women (and there is no greater test of a woman's popularity than the fact that her own sex speak evil, or think ill of her, unwillingly) shook their heads sadly, and hoped that things would come right "somehow;" hardly knowing which to pity most, the shipwright, Jack, Jael, or Dolly.

"For she's mothered her wonderful," they said, recognising by that homely phrase the love that had grown up between Dolly and her stepmother.

Jack bore his honours with manly meekness; displayed a magnanimous patience in answering the same question fifty times or so; and worked like half-a-dozen men in one.

"We'll see yo' up at our place to-night—eh, lad?" said the shipwright, as he turned to leave the yard after the day's work.

"Maybe," said Jack; and his master walked home looking thoughtful.

"She's bin floutin' him wi' some o' her pretty tricks," he thought to himself; "but he'll come round—he'll come round—a kiss 'ull do it, never fear. Who'd mind the nonsense of a little rogue like Dolly, the saucy wench!"

Once more the mellow evening light began to pale; once more a tender amethyst crept over sea and sky; and out from the veil of purple haze the curlew cried, and the incoming tide sobbed softly.

Dolly, her face pallid and set, her eyes

bright with resolve to do a deed of daring, speeds over the sandy dunes. Her dress rustles against the star-grass and bows those golden stars, the yellow blossoms of Our Lady's Bedstraw, as she passes. Here and there a little shore-frog scrambles across her pathway, and buries himself among the tufts of sea-pink as fast as his long slender legs will carry him. Up above, a skylark poised in the heart of heaven, pours forth his trilling song—his lovely lay of praise for the long sunny hours of the day that is past. The glad fountain of his joy strikes upon Dolly's ear as a jarring sound, so out of harmony with herself does it seem.

He is so happy, so happy up there, among the fainting colours of the evening sky. While she—

Ah me! how heavily Dolly's heart is beating in her heaving breast! Never has the way seemed so long before.

But at last—she has reached the trysting-place at last. Gate there is none to go through; but a gap in the wall does quite as well.

Now she is past the once hedged-in "ladies' garden." Now the broken quivering sheen of the lily-pond shines out from among arbutus and laurel, whose leaves stir and whisper faintly in the breeze that has risen far out at sea, and stolen inland to kiss the flowers good-night.

There is the heavy scent of syringa in the air; also a more pungent perfume, while something like a monster glow-worm glows among the roses.

It is the end of Arthur Cunningham's cigar; but at sight of Dolly, white and ghostly in the growing shadows, he flings it in among the lilies, where it sputters feebly and goes out.

It would be hard to say what brings Mr. Cunningham here to-night. His last parting from the shipwright's daughter had not been of such a pleasant or alluring nature that he need look longingly to a repetition of it. Perhaps the real truth was that his vanity was wounded, and he wanted to cheat himself into fancying the "rustic daisy" was more startled than angered; was rather struggling against a rising passion for himself than wishing to fly him altogether.

A little smile of triumph curls the lip that is shaded by the heavy sweeping fall of his moustache, as he catches the sound of Dolly's foot-fall, and sees her slight figure coming along the pathway towards the pond.

As for Dolly, she was full of mortal fear; yet full of a desperate courage too.

Several times as she came on her hurried way she had fancied she heard the rustle of a stealthy footstep—a footstep that stopped as she stopped; hastened as she did. We none of us like such sounds, in reality, however much we may say we do not mind them. A certain quickening of the pulses, a sensation of chilliness, even in a hot night, is apt to result. Neither of these signs of trepidation had been wanting in Dolly; but now, she forgot about the mysterious sounds, she forgot everything except that there, before her, stood the man whom she hated with a hatred as hot as was the love with which she loved that other.

All the glamour which had made those stolen meetings by the floating lilies things to be desired was gone. Playing at being a fine lady had proved, in Dolly's case, the dearest of dead failures. The pretty, painted fruit her eager hand had gathered, had turned to dust and ashes in her mouth.

Not without a certain elation of look and manner, did Arthur Cunningham take a hurried step or two that brought him to her side.

After one look into her face, he took a step backwards by way of variety; and all the lover-like tenderness and eagerness died out of his face.

"Miss—Deacon," he said, showing, it must be confessed, less coolness than might have been looked for in a man of his experience, and stammering over Dolly's name more than was seemly in a man of the world, "I—I—am very glad to see you."

The remark was trite and commonplace, altogether unworthy of one who was pleased to look upon himself as one versed in the ways of women.

"Are you?" said Dolly, her voice clear and distinct, though evidently only both by a supreme effort over herself. "I am not very glad to see you, Mr. Cunningham. I came because—there was no other way."

Amazement held the listener dumb. Dolly's little cottage-bonnet had fallen back from her head. Her cheek was pale, and her lips to match. Her eyes, larger and darker even than their wont, shone like stars, and were fixed upon Arthur Cunningham. They were full of wistful pain; puzzled, too, like those of a child who, having wandered into difficult circumstances, wonders how it got there. Coquetry was dead in them.

"If I had done what was right," continued Dolly, twisting her hands tightly the one in the other, and trying hard to keep her voice from failing or faltering, "I should never have come here at all, only——"

"Only what, little traitress?"

Arthur Cunningham had found his voice now; but on the other hand was fast losing his temper.

"Only it was nice to be made love to by a real gentleman—just for once." Here Dolly grew red with rosy shame, and her head drooped a moment on her breast.

The flush on her own cheek was reflected in that of her companion.

"So, Miss Deacon, we have, it seems, both been acting—I unconsciously."

"I don't quite know what you mean," answered Dolly, looking at him with wild, bewildered eyes; "but if you mean that I have been very wrong and foolish, you are right. That is what I came here to-night to tell you. Jael said it was the best thing to do. Then—she is going to speak up for me to Jack. Perhaps, you know, he may forgive me."

"And who is—er—er—Jack?" asked Mr. Cunningham, not without some suspicion of sheepishness in his general air and demeanour.

"Jack is my sweetheart," said Dolly, feeling proud of the fact, but getting so heart-full in the utterance of it, that tears gathered in her eyes, and her lips quivered so sadly, that it was really a wonder how she could speak at all.

"O—h!" said her companion, an exclamation which only just escaped being a long low whistle, "and this—er—Jack objects to you meeting me by the lily-pond?"

"I can never be his sweetheart any more," wailed Dolly, wringing her hands afresh, and beginning to sob in downright earnest. "Unless he listens to Jael—and forgives me."

"Is this what you came here to-night to tell me, may I ask?" questioned Mrs. Nesbit's nephew with an ugly sneer.

It is all very fine having written home so boastfully about "charming rusticity," but he was wishing most heartily at that moment that he had never set eyes on Miss Dolly.

"No; I came to tell you how wrong and foolish I have been in coming here to meet you. I came to tell you that I would rather walk after Jack barefoot, than ride in a carriage with you! I would! I would! I would!" cried Dolly, stamping

her foot upon the moss-grown pathway, and sobbing between each asseveration. "There is no one like Jack, no one—and I love him true!"

"You should have thought of all these things before, Miss Deacon," said Arthur Cunningham, cool and ironical now, and grasping the position of things firmly.

"Yes, you are right, quite right!" said Dolly, abandoning herself to a fresh impulse of penitence; "you cannot be more angry with me than I am with myself. I have been false and treacherous to the truest heart that ever beat—and all for nothing too!"

This was far from pleasant for Arthur Cunningham, it must be confessed. To say the truth he felt not a little foolish, but determined to show a bold front to the enemy.

"You put things very clearly," he said, making a great show of taking a fresh cigar out of his case, and preparing to light it; "I quite understand."

"I am so glad!" said Dolly, with an April smile breaking through her tears; "so very, very glad! And Jael will be glad too. But stay," she added, as her companion moved away a step or two, evidently anxious to escape from the garden that had proved to him by no means one of Eden. "Stay—there is one thing more. I want you to promise me not to think lightly of me—not as a girl who meant to—to—be unmaidenly, but only as one who was thoughtless and foolish, and forgot in her thoughtlessness and folly that she was—Jack's sweetheart."

The good that lies at the bottom of almost every nature, however weak or bad, was not wanting in Arthur Cunningham.

"Be sure," he said, more earnestly than he could have fancied possible a few moments back; "be sure I shall never think of you with any lack of respect, but always as Jack's sweetheart, and of Jack as a very fortunate fellow."

Dolly hung her head.

"I do not think he is that," she said sadly.

Then some sudden thought seemed to strike her. She looked up at him from under her long lashes like a chidden child, who has promised to be good and wants to fulfil the promise to its utmost limits.

"You must not look to see me here ever again, Mr. Cunningham?"

With hottest ardour he assured her how far from his thoughts was such a possibility.

After all, the situation had its ludicrous aspect, as most things have. Never was lover so eager to get rid of his mistress. Never had Arthur Cunningham hurried to the shelter of Mrs. Nesbit's comfortable abode with such affectionate alacrity.

"Gad! what an ass I've made of myself all round!" he ejaculated, as he flung himself back in a cosy lounge by the library fire; "I'll go up to town by the first train to-morrow, no matter how black the girls choose to look at the sight of me."

As to Dolly, once the excitement of the struggle over, all her strength seemed to ooze out at her fingers' ends.

She made her way out of the deserted garden, and soon got among the sandy dunes that lay between that place and home.

But, being so blinded with the tears that rose and blurred her sight, here she stumbled and tripped—and almost lost her footing!

Indeed, just beside the pine wood she would have fallen altogether, but for a pair of strong arms that caught her, and lips that kissed the tears away until she could see quite clearly that it was Jack's face so close to her own.

"Is this Jack's sweetheart?" said he, smiling, and holding her a little distance off the better to look at her.

And for all answer she clung about his neck, sobbing; and kissed him in between the sobs.

"I was there, Dolly dear, among the bushes—I heard every word you said, and know all about it now. So you'd 'rather walk barefoot wi' me, than ride in a carriage wi' him,' would you, my darling? Well! that's as it should be; and now, come home to Jael, or she'll think her little lass is lost."

"Was it Jael sent you after me?" said Dolly amazedly.

"Jael it was," replied Jack; "she told me to go and hear for myself what my sweetheart had to say to the fine gentleman who (some folks said) had stolen her dear heart from me."

There is little more to add. Jack's sweetheart has been Jack's wife this many a year, and they have yet to have their first quarrel—always excepting the one under the shadow of the thorn-tree, the one whose story has now been told.

